FOUR PRINCES

THE GROWTH OF A KINGDOM

JAMES A. B. SCHERER Ph.D.

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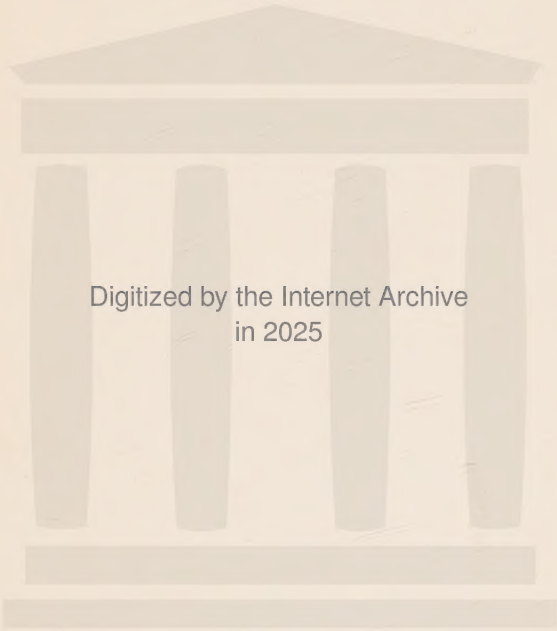
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OR

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A Story of the Christian Church centred Around Four Types

BY

JAMES A. B. SCHERER, Ph.D.

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"Zu finden die allgemeine
Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen"

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TO

ALL WHO LOVE AN INTERESTING STORY

WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT IF THEY ARE

DISAPPOINTED IT IS THE FAULT

NOT OF THE STORY

BUT OF

THE AUTHOR

KEY

Mark 4 : 26-28

"So is the kingdom of God :

The Seed.	"As if a man should cast seed into the ground ; . . . and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. . . ."	*Paul.*
The Blade.	"First the blade,"	*Constantine.*
The Ear.	"Then the ear,"	*Bernard.*
The Corn.	"After that the full corn in the ear."	*Luther.*

FOREWORD

THE three greatest structures standing in the world to-day are the Pyramids of Egypt, the Parthenon at Athens, and St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. It is a striking fact that these three structures represent, in successive order, precisely the three chief contributions of all time to human history and human civilization.

The Pyramid.—The Great Pyramid, already two thousand years old when Abraham visited the Pharaoh, is still the most prodigious of human constructions. A city of twenty-two thousand houses could be built from its cubic contents. According to Herodotus, with whom in this respect modern scholars agree, a hundred thousand men must have been employed continuously for twenty years in its construction.

But the chief interest of the Great Pyramid lies in this: that it is a fit symbol of that sublime foundation, laid first on the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates, whereon all superstructures in the arts and letters have been reared. For the East is the birthplace of history, the early home of civilization. Out of the East came light. We of the West are proud and

glad in the sunshine. Let us not forget gratitude for the mysterious and bountiful Orient, which has been the ultimate source of all the brightness that has come to bless our world.

The Parthenon.—What the lands of the Pyramid began, the land of the Parthenon completed. The liberal arts reached their climax of development in Greece. The Parthenon to this day remains the most perfect work of art that has been produced. In the phrase of Emerson,—

> "Earth proudly wears the Parthenon
> As the best gem upon her zone."

To-day our highest art is but a feeble imitation of the art of Phidias and Zeuxis. And as with art, so was it with philosophic thought. The world's great trinity of intellectual giants lived in Greece consecutively. When Socrates was forty years old Plato was born, to become his disciple; and Aristotle, when eighteen years old, became in turn the pupil of Plato. It was the golden age of the giants. Down to this day their influence on human life and character is inestimable. Even Christian theology, as to its form, has been plastic under the immortal touch of Plato and Aristotle, who died centuries before our Lord was born. Mystics, we call the kinsmen of Plato; and of the other, rationalists. Between these two hostile camps are fought all

the great intellectual battles of Christendom. It were not too much to say that the human mind, working upward, reached its summit in the days of ancient Greece.

St. Peter's.—Then, "when the fulness of time was come," the mind of God came down to meet the mind of man. What the East was to the early world, and Greece to the ancient world, far more is Christianity to the world since Greece. If the mystic pyramids speak of the sunrise glory of the Orient, and if the Parthenon symbolizes the culture of Greece, then the Cathedral at Rome, at once the highest visible expression of the papacy, and an occasion, in its building, for the rise of Protestantism,* represents the last and greatest factor in the development of human history. The story of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ has been the story of modern man. Dionysius the Little conceived a great idea when he proposed that we date our era from Christ's birth. For that year was, indeed, the central year in the history of the world. The upward soaring trains of human thought which began with the first flash of intelligence in Adam, and culminated in the shining ideals of the three Greek giants, had all been leading straight towards the Eastern star,

* See page 203.

with whose divine rays this upreaching brightness met and merged gloriously on the first Christmas morning. "All things were created by Him, and for Him." Man's progress had been God's preparation. Likewise, all history since that morning has been but the record of the universal diffusion of the beams from the Bethlehem star,—a record of the growth of a kingdom. For, as was said just now, the history of the Christian religion has been the history of modern human progress. We date our era from its birth. The name of Jehovah-God we stamp upon our coins. The Bible so permeates our literature that to blot out the one were to erase the other. The once hated cross is now our best-loved symbol; and always there dwells in this simple transverse figure a dignity and glory belonging to no other symbol known to man. Christianity is the one world-wide fraternity, with four hundred million pledged members, with halls for meeting in every hamlet, with common rites, and prayers of hoary dignity; uniting men of every clime into one vast brotherhood whose head is Christ, its badge the cross, and where the simple countersign is Faith.

Christianity a World Fact.—This by way of introduction. I desire to suggest some hint of the supreme dignity and grandeur of Christianity as a world fact; some notion of its impor-

tance as the great completing influence in the development of history; and then to ask whether we may not find it worth our while to trace a brief but clear outline of its growth. To this end our story shall be energized with flesh and blood. Men, and not periods, will mark our progress. In a word, I propose that we turn our eyes successively on four great men, in four widely separated ages, and seek to crystallize our thoughts around them in such a way as that, when we have done, we shall see more clearly, as an actual historical entity, "the church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth." The idea which too many Christians have of Christianity is bounded by the near horizon of a single denomination, or even of a single isolated congregation. What wonder, then, that their views are narrow, bigotry taking the place of devotion! Or what wonder that so many fail to serve, where they do not know how to respect! Ignorance of the church begets either a lax or a bigoted churchmanship. But to know church history, however briefly, is to wonder and admire, which means a widened sympathy and a deepened devotion.

Development is not always Progress.—Many things, indeed, will come to view, as we watch the development of the church, that are anything but admirable. We shall look now and

then upon dark and troubled scenes. But we must remember that the kingdom has perforce a human side as well as a divine side. "The seed is the word of God," but "the field is the world," with its varied evil soils. Remember, too, that the idea of growth does not imply unbroken progress, but rather includes, although it eventually overcomes, phases and periods of deterioration. Yet in spite of all this, and, indeed, rather the more gloriously because of all this, the reverent watcher will perceive the divine plant moving upward through sun and shade, calm or tempest, steadily towards the season of the ripened corn, the age of the golden harvest.

The Four Princes.—So, then, I ask you to watch with me "The Growth of a Kingdom" —and that the kingdom of God—under four of the mighty princes of this kingdom. The first of them belonged to the apostolic age; the second, to the fourth Christian century; the third, to the middle ages; and the last, to the Reformation. All of them belong to all time. The first was a scholar and an artisan; the second an emperor and a warrior; while the third and the last were monks. Considered nationally, they represent the four great racial influences that have successively given to the church its human form: the first was a Jew, the second a Græco-Roman, the

third a Franco-Italian, and the fourth a Teuton. Considered typically, they represent four of the most influential types among the workers of God's kingdom,—missionary, ruler, mystic, and reformer. Their names are Paul, the apostle; Constantine, the emperor; Bernard, the abbot of Clairvaux; and Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism.

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I

SEED-TIME

PAUL

FOUR PRINCES

OR

THE GROWTH OF A KINGDOM

I. PAUL, THE WITNESS

HERE are two pictures.

The background of the first picture is the interior of Herod's temple, more gorgeous even that that of Solomon. We have passed through the walls of snowy marble, covered over with gold; through the gate of Corinthian brass, called by pre-eminence "beautiful;" and then through the court of the Gentiles, up into that sanctuary where none but the men of Israel are allowed to come. See the splendid adornments of the golden vine, with clusters as large as a man's body! See the rich Babylonian drapery, where the colors symbolize the elements,—blue for air, yellow for earth, scarlet for fire, and purple for the sea. Such is the setting for our picture.

The First Figure.—And here, in the forefront, where he may be seen of all, stands the

solitary central figure, the figure of a proud young man, by birth a very Brahman; cultured, pious, stern. He is clad in the richest of Oriental robes, which reach to his sandalled feet. A turban is wound about his head. His beard is long and flowing. Bound between his eyes is an amulet, called phylactery, on which are written, in mystic characters, four passages from the holy Law. Thus he stands, his face upturned, his eyes upraised, his hands outspread.

What is he doing, this courtly, pious man? Why does he stand in this central place of the splendid temple, where he may be seen of all? His lips move. Let us draw nearer, that we may catch his words. Ah! he is at prayer. Is it not written in Scripture that God's house shall be called the place of prayer? It is surely a beautiful custom that this great sanctuary should be always open for men to come in and pray. Away from their learning or their labor, they come into the holy house for converse and communion with their Maker. Let us listen to this strong man's prayer. It is in keeping with his whole appearance.

"God," he cries, in a tone suggestive of familiarity, almost of condescension,—"God, I thank Thee!" True prayer always includes thankfulness, and surely this rich man, with all his blessings, has much for which to be humbly

PAUL (REMBRANDT)

grateful. Yet his is anything but a humble thanksgiving. He cannot forget self, even while he prays; his greatest blessing is himself. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are!" He is conscious of his favoritism with God, and is not at all surprised over it, since he knows himself to be so much better than his fellows. His lips curl with scorn as he names the vulgar classes. "Extortioners! unjust! adulterers! or even as this publican," he adds, with a contemptuous gesture towards an obscure figure hardly discernible yonder in the gloom. Then, with the relish of an epicure in all the virtues, he describes himself, in contrast with those others of the vulgar herd: "*I* fast twice in the week!" "*I* give tithes of all I possess."

This is such an interesting man, let us learn more about him. We are told that he was born in a cultured city on the banks of the Mediterranean, a few years after Christ; that he comes of purest Hebrew parentage, yet with all the rights of a citizen of Rome. His family provided the best of educations for the young aristocrat. When he had finished the academies of his native town, they sent him to the capital; and there, under the last of the mighty doctors, this gifted and ardent youth was "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the

fathers." He entered with all the zeal of an enthusiastic temperament the wide field of rabbinical learning, and grew to manhood with a burning zeal for the defence of the law; prepared to defend the pure traditions of the fathers at any cost. Having great passion of temperament, he feels a holy scorn for all who, not knowing the law, are "accursed." Publicans and sinners he despises, this "Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee," as he loves to call himself; while, as for heretics, they should be exterminated as so many vermin! So the vindication of the honor of God by persecuting heretics, which was taught as an obligation on all Pharisees, seemed to this man to be a supreme duty. It is just possible that his frenzy was intensified by a dormant discontent with Pharisaism. Who knows but that this vehement denunciation of "extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and publicans," with the glib recital of his own contrasted virtues, —who knows but that it was the mere answer of the tongue to an inarticulate spiritual dissatisfaction? There may be good in the man, but it is latent, buried like the warm heart of a brook under a proud mountain. At present his pride covers everything. "After the most straitest sect of our religion I live a Pharisee," he boasts. "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: cir-

cumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning zeal, persecuting; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless!" Hear his proud boast, "Blameless!" Hear again his proud prayer, "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." "For, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more!"

We see, then, that the name of this man is Saul. Well does Saul's character fit the description of the Pharisee in our Lord's parable; although of course the resemblance is not by design. Well might he have been standing there in the beautiful temple, shouting his prayer of thanksgiving that he is not as other men are.

The Second Figure.—Now let us see the second picture. We need not change the scene; only let a few years pass by. Now let us look into the temple again. At first its spacious halls seem empty. But presently we can descry a dim figure in the dark corner yonder, which is scarcely to be made out at all, so completely has it enwrapped itself in the obscurity of humility. Drawing nearer, and our eyes becoming accustomed to the gloom, we perceive a man clad in coarse and common garments; a man whose body is wasted with sad adventure and with buffetings; his shoulders stooped; his eyes, if

he would but lift them, showing a certain glazed dimness, as though they had once been blinded by a mighty light. Surely this is a man who has seen suffering.

A by-stander tells us so. "Yes," says he, pointing, "that man standing there in the dark has worked labors abundant; has borne stripes above measure; has seen frequent imprisonments, and has often stood face to face with death. Of the Jews five times he has received forty stripes save one. Thrice was he beaten with rods. Once was he stoned. Three times has he suffered shipwreck. A night and a day he has been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren! In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon him daily, the care of all the Christian churches!"

But what is he doing here in the temple, this poor tent-maker, this Jew who has had such terrible experiences, this humble man with bowed head and downcast eyes? Behold, he is praying, too. See him smite himself on the

breast!—"the hand goes where the pain is." His words are low and full of anguish, yet filled also with eager expectation. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" It is such a simple prayer. Only that, over and over again. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Nay, rather, in his own tongue his prayer is, "God be merciful to me *the* sinner," as though there were none other sinful besides. "Sinners," says he, "of whom I am chief."

Saul becomes Paul.—And is this the man who once boasted that he was blameless? Can it be that they are the same? Yes, Saul has become Paul. That proud, strong man at whom we looked just now, he it is that we see here again: his name different, his pride vanquished, his arrogance and bitter hatred changed to that love which he calls the greatest thing in the world, his cherished zeal for the law turned into a zealous devotion to that miserable lawless sect he formerly had persecuted; his friends gone, his property gone, a man whose sanity is questioned, who is hooted at for an eccentric fool, an adventurer unwelcome wherever he goes, a poor outcast Jew.

The Power of Christ.—And what has wrought this marvellous change? A single glimpse of Jesus! In the year 37 (?), shortly after the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul, the proud

young Pharisee, was journeying in state from Jerusalem to Damascus; an authorized inquisitor, with a commission from the Sanhedrin, about to prove his zeal for the holy law by an extreme persecution of those who had presumed to preach, as above the law, a strange new thing called "gospel." Drawing near the gates, a very frenzy of religious hate possesses him. See him, like some mad charger, "breathing out threatening and slaughter," his fierce nostrils quivering with the scent of blood! Then, suddenly, without warning, the ascended Son of God draws aside His veil of clouds, and shines His wondrous face, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," full into the malignant face of Saul,—a mighty light which surpassed in brightness even the brightness of the Syrian sun at mid-day. And Saul beheld "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

In the light of that face he lies prostrate and trembling; rising at last, a blind man, to be led helpless into the city, where for three days he remains without food or drink; until at length one of the men he would have killed comes to him, and in the name of Jesus gives him back his sight. Henceforth it is no longer Saul, but Paul; a marvellous witness to the "power of the resurrection" of Him who, ascended to the

right hand of the Father, drew once aside the veil to convince His friends, through this foe, that to the glorious end it was even as He had told them. Thus, to His bitterest foe, the Son of Man revealed Himself, enthroned with resistless power in complete and majestic fulfilment of His highest claims. One flash of His face was enough to transform Saul into Paul.

Paul, the Witness.—It is Paul, the witness; Paul, a mighty monument to the power of Christ, set at the entrance to the stream of Christian history, his great outstretched arm holding aloft the torch of Christian liberty, bidding a welcome to every old-world slave of the law, giving eternal proof to the transforming power of the glorious Gospel of Light.

2. PAUL, THE PLANTER

The Witness is the Planter.—Not content to be a fixed monument to the power of Christ, the witness became also the planter. If one arm be stretched aloft with a light, the other was stretched forth to scatter seed. He was made a witness, "one who has seen," that he might become an apostle, "one who is sent." "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose," said the Lord to him by the road-side at Damascus, "to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things

in the which I will appear unto thee." Because he had seen, he could the better sow. A supreme certitude steadied and directed his hand. His feet were the feet of a racer who has caught a glimpse of the goal. He had felt the seed burst and blossom in his own heart, so he knew its power. He knew Whom he believed. Therefore, from the house of a certain Ananias of Damascus, down the street which is called Straight, " a sower went forth to sow," one day, who became the mightiest of all the planters of that seed which is the word of God.

His missionary labors began immediately upon his conversion. No sooner had he been baptized, than straightway he began to preach in the synagogues of the city whither he had come to persecute. Imagine the amazement of the Pharisees, who had prepared a hearty welcome for their chief inquisitor, when they find him turned zealot himself! Imagine also the suspicious surprise of the Christians. He proved a very powerful preacher. All the lessons learned at the feet of Gamaliel, all his rabbinical researches, all the varied intellectual stores of years, were turned now to the very best account in pressing home the teaching of Scripture concerning the promised Messiah. This was re-enforced by the enthusiasm of an earnest heart, long at struggle with itself, now

overjoyed to be released from the stringent bondage of the law. He "confounded the Jews," proving with multiplied proofs that "this is the very Christ."

The World for Christ.—For a protracted season he dwelt in Arabia, seeking there that solitude which ever seems the preparation of great men for their greatest tasks. Coming out at length from his retirement, he would fain begin his ministry in earnest. He had imperative errand for the whole wide world. Up to Damascus he travelled, his presence there so enraging the Jews that he was compelled to escape by stratagem, going thence to Jerusalem on his first visit since his conversion. No wonder the apostles gathered there at first suspected him! It was Barnabas who took his part, and won their confidence for this remarkable proselyte. After witnessing to the faith of the murdered Stephen in the very place where he had helped to slay him, he was forced to leave Jerusalem, as he had had to leave Damascus, but turned undaunted to his own native city of Tarsus, where he remained in comparative obscurity for several years. Yet we may be sure that he was never idle. To the learned pagan scholars there he came as one able to argue with them on their own ground. In the synagogue where he had worshipped as a devout and eager Pharisaic lad, this zealous

proselyte would now proclaim that the hope of the Jews had been realized in the enemy of Pharisaism, Jesus the Nazarene. Finally, with holy impatience of building on other men's foundations, he gave glad heed to the call of the strong church at Antioch, through his friend Barnabas, and was sent out thence as the first and greatest foreign missionary.

Paul's Adventures.—In this, his appointed work, no perils ever affrighted him, no disappointment discouraged him. He braved the dangers of mountain travel among the haunts of murderous brigands. He ventured in frail little ships upon the stormy seas, and, when cast ashore from shipwreck upon an island of strangers, straightway set about winning the populace to serve his Lord and Master. He might fail of his destination, but never of his purpose; wherever he found people he would preach. He preached to the sneering scholars of Athens with as great assurance of his message as when talking of the gospel with Aquila and Priscilla in their humble home at Corinth. Sometimes he would be welcomed with acclaim, only to be stoned next day. In Lystra the enthusiastic heathen took him for their god Mercury, coming with oxen and with garlands to do worship before him and Barnabas; but the next day these foolish, fickle folk beat him and cast him

out of the city for dead. Sometimes he was the cause of violent riots, as when at Ephesus the mob yelled itself hoarse against him. Sometimes he made even the lords of imperial Rome to tremble, as he reasoned of righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come. Truly, this little man "turned the world upside down." From the day of his conversion at Damascus there was never an hour when his one aim was not to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. "This one thing I do," was his motto.

Paul's Methods.—His mode of evangelization has been vividly described by Dr. Stalker. He and his companions would enter a town "as quietly and unnoticed as any two strangers who may walk into one of our towns any morning. Their first care was to get a lodging; and then they had to seek for employment, for they worked at their trade wherever they went. Nothing could be more commonplace. Who could dream that this travel-stained man, going from one tent-maker's door to another, seeking for work, was carrying the future of the world beneath his robe? When the Sabbath came round they would cease from toil, like the other Jews in the place, and repair to the synagogue. They joined in the psalms and prayers with the other worshippers and listened to the reading of the Scriptures. After this the presiding elder

might ask if any one present had a word of exhortation to deliver. This was Paul's opportunity. He would rise and, with outstretched hand, begin to speak. At once the audience recognized the accents of the cultivated rabbi, and the strange voice won their attention. Taking up the passages which had been read, he would soon be moving forward on the stream of Jewish history, till he led up to the astounding announcement that the Messiah hoped for by their fathers and promised by their prophets had come, and he had been sent among them as His apostle. Then would follow the story of Jesus: it was true, He had been rejected by the authorities of Jerusalem and crucified, but this could be shown to have taken place in accordance with prophecy; and His resurrection from the dead was an infallible proof that He had been sent of God; now He was exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel and the remission of sins. We can easily imagine the sensation produced by such a sermon from such a preacher, and the buzz of conversation which would arise among the congregation after the dismission of the synagogue. During the week it would become the talk of the town; and Paul was willing to converse at his work or in the leisure of the evening with any who might desire further information. Next Sab-

bath the synagogue would be crowded, not with Jews only, but Gentiles also, who were curious to see the strangers; and Paul now unfolded the secret that salvation by Jesus Christ was as free to Gentiles as to Jews. This was generally the signal for the Jews to contradict and blaspheme; and, turning his back on them, Paul addressed himself to the Gentiles. But meantime the fanaticism of the Jews was aroused, and they either stirred up the mob or secured the interest of the authorities against the strangers; and in a storm of popular tumult or by the breath of authority the messengers of the gospel were swept out of the town."

Results.—But the seeds of truth had been planted, and a little Christian congregation would result. Often Paul would visit these infant churches again, confirming them in the faith, and assisting, with his wonderful executive ability, in the affairs of organization. During the fifteen years of his evangelizing labors, he travelled thousands of miles, by land and sea, preaching to myriads of people and establishing numerous congregations. Far and wide did this wonderful planter fling the gospel seed. Wherever his lot was cast, or wherever his mission called him, there did he go, joyfully sowing the word of God. No life was ever more crowded with labor, miraculous in its multiplicity; no

life was ever more wholly concentrated in its consecration to the one thing. Nor has any other human life so impressed itself on the ages that were yet to be. To this day Paul is the inspired and constant planter of the truth. Whose words come now to strengthen the faint-hearted, turning their sorrow into gladness, when they hear, in wonderful paradox, that "His strength is made perfect in weakness"? Who comes with a god-like scorn for the trials of earth, lifting mourners on the wings of eagles with his reckoning that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"? Who untangles the skeins of perplexity that sometimes fall into our hands, with his strong assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God"? "If God be for us," he cries, triumphantly, "who can be against us?" What a crown the Lord hath given him! Thirteen out of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament written by this man, who was God's pen! His faith to-day is the faith of millions; his sway far greater than that of any other "dead but scept'red sovereign," as he rules us from his place beside Him concerning Whom he said, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." A little while ago he was friendless; now he is friend to the King of kings. A

little while ago he was poverty stricken; now he is joint heir with Christ of all the riches of the Father. Then he had no position; now his place is one that angels might envy. Then his sanity was questioned; now he is wise with the wisdom of one who sees face to face. Then he was a fool for Christ's sake; now the plaudits of all Christendom are his. He was a wanderer and an outcast; but now he has a home, and his home is the home of God. He that sowed in tears is partaker of the first fruits in the heavenly kingdom of his Master.

3. THE SOIL, THE SEASON, AND THE WATERING

Paul a Type.—This was the age of the planting of the church. Paul was but the chief in a great army of planters, whose activities during the first, second, and third centuries are well typified by his own. Like him, they were witnesses. The word "martyr" means a witness. And like him, they diffused the truth both by preaching and with their pens. The epistles of Peter and James and John were written for the strengthening of the infant churches scattered throughout the world. So the successors of the apostles, such as Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and Justin, were mighty, both in deed and in word, as planters. All had to deal, too, with the same

conditions that confronted Paul. Let us see what those conditions were.

(a) A Rotten Soil.—What of the soil whereon Paul, the planter, flung his seed? It was rotten soil, forsooth. Scepticism had brought with it a contempt for the older moralities, and a despair which led to the most reckless excesses of shame. At one time the Romans had gloried in their virtue; now their glory is in their shame. Never has the human race sunk to lower depths of infamy than during the reign of the Cæsars. The characteristics of Roman civilization under the empire may, as Dean Farrar says, be summed in the two phrases, heartless cruelty and unfathomable corruption. Nero was Paul's emperor. He murdered for the pure love of murder. Having regard for no being on earth or in heaven except himself, he called himself divine, and ordained that homage should be done to him as to a god. Gibbon says that he was at once a priest, an atheist, and a god. Too cowardly at the last to live, he proved also to be too cowardly to die, whining for a slave's hand to press home the dagger which his own was to weak to drive. And yet the tutor of this monster had been the great moralist, Seneca, supreme product of Roman culture, who nevertheless connived at some of his master's basest crimes! Plato had, indeed, been great

enough to foresee that a mere philosophy would be powerless to regenerate society. In his discourse on laws he had declared that three forces would be necessary to effect a reformation,—first, piety, or love to a divine Person; secondly, the desire for honor, or for the respect of the good; and finally, the love of moral beauty, instead of physical beauty alone, which was a passion with the Greeks and Romans. But, alas! even in Plato's time, conditions were so terrible that the great seer despaired of the realization of these ideals; and by Paul's time the state of society was tenfold worse.

No description more graphic than his own can be given of Roman society as he found it. After delicate allusion to nameless sins, he sweeps the whole gamut of crime in an attempt to characterize the Romans, who, he says, were filled with all unrighteousness,—fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; being whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; "who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them!"

To such a people did Paul come preaching; and it is surely a significant fact that precisely the three regenerative forces for which Plato had sighed were offered in the gospel that he preached. First, a Divine Person was upheld for the love of mankind, transcending the fairest ideals whereof the brightest of the Greeks had dreamed. Next, because this Person was the supreme embodiment of goodness, and because devotion to Him means a striving to be like Him, Paul's preaching offered to every man who would strive to follow Christ the honor and respect of all his fellow-followers. Finally, by an ethical teaching of unequalled beauty, it filled the mind with thoughts of the things that are pure and lovely and of good report. Thus the three forces for which the great Greek longed were supplied, and far more than supplied, by the gospel of St. Paul; the Providence of Heaven fulfilling the need of the world; and it now remains to be seen whether they will, as Plato predicted, suffice for the regeneration of society.

(b) **A Ready Season.**—If the soil was bad, yet the season was undoubtedly good. It was a time when the intellectual world was very ready for "some new thing." Plato and his fellows had helped to make it so. The Romans, indeed, had completed a physical conquest of

the Greeks, but Greece still remained the intellectual mistress of the world. The Grecian lands were Romanized, but the Roman people were Hellenized. And the natural result of this was a strong discontent, among the thoughtful Romans, with their old childish religions. No earnest man could read the discourses of Aristotle concerning practical morality without disgust for the immoralities practised in the name of Roman religion. No aspiring man could learn the wonderful notions of Plato about the immortality of the soul and stay content with the old blind order of things. None could hearken to the sublime theology of Socrates and remain a sincere worshipper of sensual human gods. Hear him, speaking to his friend: "Then shalt thou understand, my Aristodemus, that there is a Being whose eye pierceth throughout all nature, and whose ear is open to every sound; extended to every place, extending throughout all time; whose bounty and care can know no other bound save those fixed by His own creation!" After such a reach towards heaven as that, how could the earnest and cultured pagan longer accept as his Bible an Iliad, an Odyssey, or an Æneid, with their petty fables of gods many, gods men? And yet no one was found able to complete what the giants had suggested. Having once felt their touch, humanity was like

some pitiful Undine, unable either to return into the childish rest of the past, or to live tranquilly in the dim dawn of better days. The world was perplexed and bewildered. So it was that by the time of St. Paul the intellectual pagans had divided into the two opposed camps of Stoic and Epicurean. Each denied what the other maintained. And yet each had a real share in shaping the minds of men to receive two of the great seed-thoughts of St. Paul,—namely, fraternity and charity,—the Stoics by inculcating a common human brotherhood as against the old exclusiveness which called all outsiders "barbarians;" and the Epicureans by teaching that it is better to confer a benefit than to receive one, thus anticipating Paul's Christian word, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Indeed, the very opposition of these rival philosophies produced a paradoxical sort of preparation for the planting of St. Paul. For Greek philosophy, as we have seen, had destroyed the old religions. And now, men reasoned, since philosophy destroys itself, we know nothing that is true. O that some Higher One would come to seize and continue those "upward-soaring trains of thought" which the giants originated, but none can complete! And so, in this wise, as Rudolf Sohm has eloquently suggested, the world's desire went forth to meet the world's Saviour.

But the Romans, as well as the Greeks, had aided in making the season ready for the gospel. They had made it possible for Paul to sow in one great field, instead of in many separated fields. The unity of the empire was of immense advantage to him and to the other planters. A common law protected them. A universal language made their preaching understood in every province. The radiating highways of a great centralized commerce bore them into many regions with safety and despatch. Thus man's progress, again, had been God's preparation. "The fulness of time was come." And as the final step in this great work of making ready, the Jews had been dispersed in every community, leavening the pagan mind with that teaching of the Old Testament law which is "a school-master to lead men to Christ."

Rome was the centre of this great prepared world. And so Paul cried, eagerly, "I must see Rome!" His master mind discerned that if the gospel were to become a world-fact, it must find lodgement in the prepared heart of the one world-power. He himself earnestly believed that now the fulness of time was come, when to the wise Greek, the just Roman, and the religious Jew, united under one vast empire, should be preached redemption through the blood of Jesus, who maketh many one (see 1

Cor. i. 30). As we consider all the circumstances that met him in his work, we see, with Schiller, that facts are indeed the finger of God; that Jehovah, who ordereth the seasons, had prepared the world's seasons for the sowing of His seed.

(c) The Deluge of Blood.—And now He is about to mingle with the seed of the word a new seed, showered broadcast in a crimson flood, which, under the mysterious laws of the divine chemistry, shall fertilize the barren earth for better receiving that seed which is the word of God. The time of the sowing of blood is come. Tertullian, who experienced the woes of this terrible time, was wise enough to see that God would cause the wrath of man to praise Him, and predicted that the blood of the martyrs would become the seed of the church.

Christ had distinctly foretold persecutions. "If the world hate you," He said to the disciples, "ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." His sufferings were to be a prelude to their sufferings. "Remember," He continued, with frank foreboding, "the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

Paul's Death.—Scarcely had He Himself been crucified, when these words began to be fulfilled. Stephen was the first to suffer martyr-

dom, in Jerusalem. His fate eventually became the fate of all the apostles, save only John. That was a striking scene when Paul stood before Nero at Rome,—"the best man in the world before the worst man in the world,"—and it was the hour of the power of darkness. On that splendid throne sat a great bloated beast, his lip heavy with the thirst for blood, his eye dull with a ceaseless madness against the good, the true, and the beautiful. Here, before him, chained and helpless, stands a white-haired man; one of the best, the truest, the most beautiful characters this world has ever seen. The huge beast leers, and gloats with satisfaction over his prey. The little eyes transfix Paul as a serpent's eyes a dove. Then, lazily, leisurely, voluptuously, the swollen tongue rolls out the choice morsel of a word that calls for death, and Paul's heart fairly leaps with the thought, "To die is gain!" The soldiers lead him away, a rabble at his heels. "The headsman's sword gleamed in the sun and fell; and the head of the apostle of the world rolled down into the dust."

So, in his death he was still a planter, leaving to Rome the precious legacy of his blood. If the blood of the martyrs is to be the seed of the church, what mighty harvest may we not expect, since the dust of the world's chief city

is clotted with the blood of the world's chief martyr?

The death of Paul did, indeed, seem to mark the transition of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. The first national influence that had given to the church its human mould may be said to have ended with him; henceforth this influence is to be no longer predominantly Jewish, but, for a protracted period, Græco-Roman. Therefore we see an aptness in the otherwise puzzling fact that the book of the Acts closes with the simple statement of Paul's arrival in Rome. When this great Jew had planted the gospel in the heart of the imperial Roman city, the Jew's work was ended. Within a few years of the death of Paul Jerusalem itself succumbed to Rome, after the bloodiest siege in history. The glory of the Jew had perished, and with it the earthly anchorage of the little church. Christianity, cut loose from its Jewish moorings, was left to drift on the mighty stream of history, only a few feeble folk seeking refuge in it as the ark of heavenly safety from the tempests of that most stormy age, the age of Nero. Earthly safety there was none. Their eyes were turned towards the stars, as their little ark drifted upon a stream of blood.

Nero.—Nero's lust for blood was by no means satiated with a single Christian murder. He

was a wholesale butcher; and the Christians seemed made ready to his hand. They proved especially convenient when his own person was endangered through his insane burning of his own imperial city, which he desired to rebuild and call Neropolis, after he should have witnessed the superb spectacle of the fire! Finding that he had overstepped himself with the enraged populace, he looked about him for a scapegoat, whereon he might saddle his own atrocious crime. Some demon near the throne whispered into the royal ear, "Persecute the Christians!" Nero seized eagerly upon this ingenious suggestion. The members of the ignoble sect were already despised, for the austerity of their simple lives, and for the fearless frankness of their moral teachings. Moreover, the popular mind confused them with the always hated Jews, and believed, too, that those frequent Christian meetings could bode no public good. In short, the Christians were an unsociable, unpopular lot. What could be easier than to charge them with the crime of the fire, and make them pay the penalty?

The scheme succeeded only too well. How well, we will let the contemporary Roman historian, the pagan Tacitus, tell in his own words:

"In order to get rid of this report, Nero trumped up an accusation against a sect, de-

tested for their atrocities, whom the common people called Christians, and tortured them with the most exquisite penalties. Christus, the founder of this sect, had been put to death, during the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator Pontius Pilate. But the abominable superstition, repressed for a season, was again breaking out, not only through Judea, where the evil had originated, but even throughout the city, whither from every quarter all things atrocious or shameful are drifted together and win a following. Therefore, those were first arrested who confessed their religion, and then, on their evidence, a vast multitude were condemned, not so much on the charge of arson, as for their contempt towards the human race. Various forms of mockery were devised to enhance their dying agonies. Covered with the skins of wild animals, they were doomed to die by the mangling of dogs, or by being nailed to crosses; or to be set on fire and burnt after twilight, by way of lighting the darkness. Nero offered his own park for this spectacle, and gave a chariot-race, mingling with the rabble in the dress of a charioteer, or actually driving about among them."

Dean Farrar adds: "Imagine that awful scene, once witnessed by the silent obelisk in the square before St. Peter's at Rome! There,

where the vast dome now rises, were once the gardens of Nero. They were thronged with gay crowds, among whom the emperor moved in his frivolous degradation—and on every side were men dying slowly on their cross of shame. Along the paths of those gardens on the autumn nights were ghastly torches, blackening the ground beneath them with streams of sulphurous pitch, and each of those living torches was a martyr in his shirt of fire. And in the amphitheatre hard by famished dogs were tearing to pieces some of the best and purest of men and women, hideously disguised in the skins of bears or wolves. Thus did Nero baptize in the blood of the martyrs the city which was to be for ages the capital of the world!"

But the persecution under Nero was only the beginning of Christian martyrdom. When better men sat on the throne the Christians were still hunted and hounded and slain. The persecution of Nero, indeed, while extremely cruel, was only local, and entirely incidental; the Christianity of the victims being not the cause, but merely the occasion, of their martyrdom.

Trajan.—Not until forty years after Nero's death were Christians recognized as forming a distinct society, and made legally liable to specific persecution, on the ground either of impiety or of opposition to the public good. This was during

the reign of the emperor Trajan, under whom the noble Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was put to death; and it is indeed narrated that on one occasion, as a result of Trajan's law, no less than ten thousand believers perished by wild beasts in a single day. Under this same law Christians were regarded for more than three centuries as enemies of the public weal. Here and there some distinguished "father" marks the progress of the march of blood—as Polycarp, the aged bishop of Smyrna (under Antoninus Pius, in the year 155), who answered the temptation of his inquisitors with the beautiful words, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never done me any wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King, who is also my Saviour?" No less a moralist than the Emperor Marcus Aurelius authorized a persecution in Southern Gaul, which claimed almost countless victims (A.D. 177). Under Septimius Severus conversion to the new religion was forbidden by law (202), and as a result many Christians were tortured to death in Egypt and in the Latin province of Africa.

Decius, Gallus, Valerian.—Thus the laws grew ever stricter. But it was not until the year 250 that the state came to recognize Christianity as a really formidable power, against which, for the first time, a general and continu-

ous persecution was therefore ordered. Hitherto the persecutions could be brought only under some specific charge. But now, under Decius, Gallus, and Valerian, is waged a terrific general struggle between Christianity and the secular authority. Throughout the empire the officials were commanded to seize the entire body of Christians and compel them to offer sacrifices to the pagan deities, including the deified emperor himself. The attack was now thoroughly systematized. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, Fabian of Rome, Babylas of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem, were among the numberless martyrs of these ten bloody years, while the great Greek father, Origen, was at least imprisoned.

This persecution was succeeded by forty years of peace, while the state rested from the struggle, hoping that its murderous work was done. But "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,"—such is one of the mystical, mysterious laws of the growth of the kingdom. Eusebius tells us that during this period "great multitudes flocked to the religion of Christ."

Therefore the state gathered its forces, under Diocletian and Galerius, for one supreme and crushing onslaught, from which there could be no possibility of escape or recuperation. The cross had become a hideous nightmare to the

Roman crown. Behold, here is an increasing multitude of fanatics, in all parts of the empire, who persistently reject the watchword of the state, "We have no king but Cæsar!" It is bald treason. They are rebels, a menace to the safety of the empire, and must be crushed as vermin. Moreover, the imperious arm of the government has hitherto proved notably powerless against them. The national prestige is involved. Shall the world be allowed to think that Rome, the mistress of the world, with her ever invincible legions, is unable to crush a miserable sedition like this of the followers of that despised, crucified Jew? Shall one who was outcast by the Jews themselves, being unutterably shamed by the ignominious death of the cross—shall such a one, a dead Jew, a crucified Jew, hold in the hearts of Roman subjects a higher place than the divine Cæsar? The thought is intolerable. The time has come for deadly, irrecoverable action. At all costs, the pest must be exterminated. Both the safety and the honor of the state demand it.

Diocletian and Galerius.—Therefore, after forty years of peace, the old battle was reopened, without warning, on the 23d day of February, 303, by the destruction of the Nicomedian Christian church. The next day imperial edicts were issued, ordering that all Christian officials, mili-

tary or civil, be retired from their posts; that all the churches and the so-called sacred books be destroyed, and that the clergy should be imprisoned. The following year another edict commanded that all Christians offer pagan sacrifices, under pain of instant and terrible death. With frightful earnestness these violent orders were enforced. There were eight years of "insane butchery." The dungeons were choked with inmates, while the slaughter machines were kept well oiled with blood. It is said that in numerous towns the streets were "literally blocked up with the stakes and scaffolds where death was dealt alike to men and women and little children." Believers were dragged at the heels of wild horses, or laid upon red-hot gridirons, or sawn asunder, or left in dungeons to rot. The skin was pulled from their flesh piece by piece. "The bears hugged them to death, the lions tore them to pieces, the wild bulls tossed them upon their horns." The whole Roman world was soaked with the blood of the martyrs. The words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, though written of a former age, well describe the martyrdoms under Diocletian and Galerius. For then there were found many to be "tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourg-

ing, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, and tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

The State conquers.—At last, at last, the Roman State believed that the battle was ended, and that the ever-victorious armies had succeeded against yet one more foe,—the least destructive, but most indestructible, that ever the legionaries had had to face. So many Christians had been slain, there could surely be none left. The sect had been exterminated, its books burnt, its property all destroyed or confiscated. Rome could now rest in final triumph. Therefore the salaried butchers washed the red stains from their weary arms and made ready for the festivals of a victorious peace. A memorial medal was ordered to be struck, bearing on one side the words, "The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored!" In Spain two monumental pillars were erected in honor of Diocletian, "for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ, and for having extended the worship of the gods."

The battle was over.

And yet—it is whispered that the wife of Diocletian and the wife of Galerius are themselves Christians! History tells us, moreover, that Diocletian at last died in a manner that was interpreted as a fearful judgment of God; and that Galerius, while breathing his last in unutterable misery, actually surrendered all for which he had fought so long and bitterly, by the issue of an edict of Christian toleration. Nor can we forget those haunting, mystical words of Tertullian, when he said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the kingdom." We have witnessed the planting; what shall the harvest be?

II

THE MAGIC BLADE

CONSTANTINE

I. A MIRACLE OF GROWTH

THE successor of Diocletian and Galerius was Constantine.

Is there in all history a more stupendous fact than this? Think of what it means! A Jewish peasant, bearing the common name of Jesus, had spent three years of his life in such a way as to make even his own family say that he was "beside himself." Deserted at the last even by his own chosen twelve, one of them delivered him into the hands of Roman soldiers, who mocked him, scourged him, slapped him, and spat in his face. His boasted crown turned out to be but a crown of thorns, plaited by the coarse thick fingers of some Roman guardsman. For his sceptre, they put a reed into his hand. Then they knelt, with mocking laughter, and hailed him as a king. Silent, pale, helpless, he could not save himself. The climax of failure and of shame was reached in the mode of his death,—one reserved for only the most degraded and debased. Yes, the Roman soldiers crucified him, and speared him, and at the foot of his cross raffled away his garments. So died he: in perfect loneliness, utter defeat, and profoundest shamefulness. Yet, because of a rumor that

was spread abroad shortly after his death, people began to believe in him again, and a sect sprang up. This sect gained a following at last in Rome; because as the citizen Tacitus bitterly says, everything worthless and vile drifted to the capital. Nero burnt these fanatics. Trajan outlawed them. The gentle Aurelius did not scruple to murder them. Decius slew them wholesale. Diocletian and Galerius sought them out man by man, woman by woman, child by child, determined that not one of the vermin should remain to corrupt the Roman state. Then, after two hundred and fifty years of this fierce and bloody work, the state rested in weary satisfaction and celebrated its victory.

But the next emperor is a Christian. He takes the eagles from his standards, and replaces them with crosses; the badge of shame becomes a sign of glory. He bids his Roman soldiers fight in the name of the crucified Jew. Roman soldiers bow the knee to Him whom Roman soldiers scourged. Again do they put a crown upon His head and a sceptre in His hand, but not in scorn. Jesus is their King, above Cæsar. Galilee has conquered Rome. The empire becomes Christian by imperial decree. Christians, no longer wandering about in deserts or dwelling in the caves of the earth, drive in gilded chariots of state, becoming the most honored officers of the

empire. They have exchanged their goat-skins for brocade, the purple of mourning for the purple of rule. The poor are rich, the debased are exalted, the vanquished are the victors. "Constantine, the Defender," succeeds "Galerius, the Butcher." The blood of the martyrs has become the seed of the church. Enough blood had been sown as seed.

The Magic Blade.—We see now the mighty blade spring up as swiftly as those plants which, at a magician's touch, grow from seed to fruit before our wondering eyes. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and the seed should spring and grow up, *he knoweth not how,*—first the blade." Each drop of blood was a seed of faith, like to a grain of mustard-seed; and now is sprung up a mighty blade under the shadow of which the vast Roman empire finds its refuge.

Secret Fruit.—Of startling suddenness seems the change from Galerius to Constantine, and yet this change had been long preparing. It seems the more sudden because hitherto the Christians had been compelled to hide their heads, or else lose them, and hence their real strength could not be known. For a long time there had been thousands of secret disciples. Acte, a woman of Nero's own household, is thought to have been such, while we have already

seen that even the wives of Diocletian and Galerius were suspected of strong sympathy with the Christian faith; and it is clear that Constantius Chlorus, who became co-regent with Galerius after the death of Diocletian, was distinctly opposed to the intolerant attitude of his associate.

Constantius and Helena.—This soldier-emperor, Constantius the Pale, had yielded in his youth to ardent love for the humble daughter of a taverner. Her name was Helena. Her character, by all accounts, corresponded with the wonderful beauty of her person. As Schaff says, it is by no means unlikely that Theodoret is right, and that this fortunate tavern girl, who became empress, was from early life a devout follower of "The Way." This would account for the tolerant spirit of her husband, and for the eventual conversion of their only son, Constantine the Great.

Their Son.—He was born in the year 272, possibly in Britain. We know but little of his early life. Like his father, he became a soldier, distinguishing himself under Diocletian in an expedition against Egypt, as also under Galerius in the Persian war. He possessed all the qualities that make an officer popular among his soldiers. It did not matter to them that he was illiterate and vain; his ambition was, indeed,

with them a strong point in his favor. He was a powerful, broad-shouldered youth, of an Apollo-like beauty, with courteous manners, and a good-natured jest ready always to keep his men in good humor. He was industrious, shirking none of the severe duties of the stern Roman discipline; he was true to his friends in their times of greatest need; he was generous, and, above all, he was brave. What more could soldiers ask for the making of a hero?

Constantine becomes Emperor.—It is no wonder, then, that when Constantius Chlorus died at York, England, in the year 306, the all-powerful soldiers immediately chose his son as his successor. Naturally, this did not please Galerius, who had long been jealous of the growing popularity of the handsome and brave young prince. But Galerius, in view of the divided condition of the empire, could hardly venture to oppose the soldiers' choice openly. He did manage, however, to divide the divided rulership still further, by elevating two of his favorites to share the throne with himself. So Galerius and his two friends ruled as "emperors" of the East, while Constantine had two other rivals in the West.

His Divided Empire.—Such was the pitiable plight of the once united empire when the soldiers set the crown upon the head of Constan-

tine, at the ancient town of York, in Britain. Ascending the throne, the young prince found his empire cut in twain, and, what was worse, in each half there were three emperors! But his ambition immediately set itself for conquest and for a unification of the realm under one sole ruler, to be none other than Constantine himself.

Chance—or was it Providence?—assisted him. It was not long before one of his own rivals in the West was put to death, as the result of a conspiracy with which Constantine had nothing to do. And this was shortly followed by the death of Galerius himself, in the East, yet not before he had yielded to the influence of Constantine in signing a joint edict of general toleration in all matters appertaining to religion. Constantine was now left with but three rivals,—Licinius, who had become his ally, and the two opposing emperors, Maxentius and Maximin.

His Religion.—Up to this time (the year 312) Constantine had been nothing more than a tolerant pagan. So late as the year 308 we find him doing service to the sun-god Apollo, by the presentation of princely offerings.* Superstitious

* "The same tenacious adherence to the ancient god of light has left its trace, even to our own time, on one

and selfish, he would not slight the pagan deities. Doubtless the same unworthy motive prompted his favorable attitude towards Christianity, as manifested in his dealings with Galerius. He wanted to be on the good side of all the gods. He could not forget, in particular, that his pro-Christian father had prospered, whereas the persecutors had met with misfortune. Eusebius reports him as saying, "My father revered the Christian God and uniformly prospered, while the emperors who worshipped the heathen gods died a miserable death. Therefore, that I may enjoy a happy life and reign, I will imitate the example of my father, and join myself to the cause of the Christians, who are increasing daily, while the heathen are diminishing."

Such was his "religious" attitude when the moment of his life arrived. Maxentius, who,

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of the most sacred and universal of Christian institutions. The retention of the old pagan name of '*Dies Solis,*' or 'Sunday,' for the weekly Christian festival is, in great measure, owing to the union of pagan and Christian sentiment with which the first day of the week was recommended to his [Constantine's] subjects, pagan and Christian alike, as the 'venerable day of the sun.' His decree, regulating its observance, has been justly called 'a new era in the history of the Lord's day.' It was his mode of harmonizing the discordant religions of the empire under one common institution." —STANLEY.

with Maximin, ruled Italy and Africa, was a cruel and vicious tyrant, hated by heathen and Christian alike. So the Roman people, finally unwilling to tolerate any longer this brutal rule, invited the powerful and popular Constantine to come over from Gaul and relieve them. Nothing loath, the man of the hour struck hands with his associate Licinius, and in the year 312 marched with a little army against the tyrant of the Tiber, charging his colleague to look after Maximin. And this brings us, at last, to a certain October day which proved to be a turning-point in the history of the world. We will let Eusebius tell, in his own words, of the most romantic and dramatic event in the history of the church since the days of the apostles themselves.

The Day of the Fiery Cross.—As Constantine, with his small army, approached the legionaries of Maxentius, he heard that the tyrant was resorting to extraordinary measures in order to secure the favor of the heathen gods. Therefore, reflecting once more on the fortunes of his father, and "being convinced that he needed some more powerful aid than his military forces could afford him,—on account of the wicked and magical enchantments which were so diligently practised by the tyrant,—he began to seek for divine assistance. While he was praying with

fervent entreaty, a most marvellous sign appeared to him from heaven, the account of which it might have been difficult to receive with credit, had it been related by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history, when I was honored with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who could hesitate to credit the narration, especially since the testimony of succeeding years has established its truth? He said that at midday, when the sun had just passed the zenith, he saw, with his own eyes, the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, 'By this conquer!' At the sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which happened to be following him on his expedition, and so witnessed the miracle. He said, moreover, that he wondered within himself what the meaning of this apparition could be. While he continued to ponder and reason on its import, night imperceptibly drew on; and in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to procure a standard made in the likeness of that sign, and to use it in all engagements with his enemies."

We know not how to explain this wonderful

story. That it has some sort of genuine historical foundation is equally evident with the secular proof for the somewhat similar conversion of St. Paul. That is, the sudden and remarkable results produced in the two cases certainly call for some sudden and remarkable cause. It has been suggested that Constantine, anxious over the outcome of the great battle he was about to fight, and filled with reminiscences of his father's experience, saw this fiery cross in a dream—for Eusebius, unfortunately, is not entirely reliable. Or, it is entirely possible that what the emperor saw was a part of a system of solar halos, two of which, at right angles, would form a cross. The Encyclopædia Britannica records that at Brighton, England, on the 1st of April, 1852, just as the sun was setting, a ray of brilliant light shot upward above the horizon, directly perpendicular to the sun, and that soon after its appearance it was crossed by another band of light, thus forming a perfect cross, which was visible for half an hour. Or the event may, indeed, have been an actual miracle, like that mighty light at noonday which blinded Saul by the road-side at Damascus. Whatever the explanation of the fiery cross, we doubt not that it was an agency employed by Divine Providence to control a remarkable turning-point in human history. Explain the apparition as we may, the

fact remains that Constantine undoubtedly believed he had seen a heavenly vision, and that to this heavenly vision he was not disobedient. He wrote the initials of Christ's name on the shields of his soldiers, and marked the cross upon their helmets. The eagles were removed from the summits of the Roman standards, giving place to the gallows of the Jew. The new labarum, according to Eusebius, "consisted of a long spear overlaid with gold, and a crosspiece of wood, from which hung a square flag of purple cloth embroidered and covered with precious stones. On the top of the shaft was a crown composed of gold and jewels, just beneath this crown being an image of the emperor and his sons." To this day the designs on chancel cloths, X P, serve to remind us of the Greek monogram of Christ's name, ☧, written by the first Christian emperor upon his battle standards.

The promise of the vision was fulfilled, and under the sign of the cross the emperor was victorious. On the 27th of October, 312, the legionaries of Maxentius were defeated, near the city of Rome, their leader perishing miserably in the waters of the Tiber. Moreover, Licinius was successful over Maximin, whose death followed close upon his defeat at Heraclea, so that Constantine and Licinius were now the only

survivors of the six co-regents of five years before.

The Edict of Toleration.—Constantine did not permit the elation of triumph to obliterate his vision of the cross. After his victorious entrance into Rome he erected in the forum a statue of himself, which held in its right hand the Christian labarum, with the words, "By this saving sign, true token of bravery, have I delivered your city from the yoke of the tyrant." And the next year, seeking out Licinius in Milan, he induced him to join in the famous edict which not only proclaimed absolute freedom of religious toleration, but also provided for the restitution of all churches, and other Christian property, that had been confiscated during the times of persecution. The edict proceeds, magnanimously: "They who, as we have said, restore them without valuation and without price may expect their indemnity from our munificence and liberality."

There remained but one more step for Constantine to take: he had not yet officially proclaimed Christianity as the state religion. This proclamation was not issued until he had finally attacked and conquered his sole remaining rival, Licinius, who, to strengthen his position, had courted and secured the support of thousands of pagans opposed to the Christian inclinations of

Constantine. This final struggle was therefore equivalent to a struggle between heathendom and Christendom for the possession of the Roman crown. In several successive battles the Christians conquered. The last contest, occurring in September, 324, resulted in the complete overthrow of Licinius and the attainment of Constantine's supreme ambition. The Roman empire was once more united under a single ruler, and a Christian emperor was master of the world!

The Edict of Establishment. — Immediately upon the achievement of his long-cherished desire, Constantine took the last step in his favoritism of the Christian religion. He issued a general exhortation to all of his subjects that they should become the disciples of Christ. Now, while this decree, with a wise liberality that surprises us, conserved the spirit of religious toleration by permitting all Roman subjects to worship according to their convictions, it nevertheless virtually amounted to the general adoption of Christianity throughout the empire. For, although many were to be found who still adhered to the traditions of their fathers, yet, on the whole, the emperor's preference was the people's choice. From this time forth he took a prominent part in the counsels of the church, although not baptized until just before his death. To-

gether with his aged Christian mother, the innkeeper's daughter, he erected handsome churches, especially in Jerusalem. He was punctilious in attendance on public services, and even preached on occasions, using with great effect the events of his own life to prove the power of the Christians' God.

The Council of Nice.—In the year 325 the emperor called, in the city of Nice, a general council of the church, over which he himself presided. In the matter of this convocation Constantine was perhaps influenced by motives of policy more than by a desire to protect Christian doctrine. For he had hoped that this religion would prove a powerful bond of union throughout the reunited empire, and was disappointed upon finding the church cut into factions over the question of the divinity of Christ. He therefore called a council, in order that this question might be settled and all cause for disunity removed. Arius, an elder from Alexandria, was leader of the unitarian wing, while Athanasius, afterwards bishop of Alexandria, was champion for the trinitarians. Athanasius triumphed, the Nicene Creed remaining to us as an outgrowth of Constantine's council. What a contrast, as Schaff points out, between Nero, driving his chariot through avenues of Christian martyrs, and Constantine, taking his golden throne at the

nod of the martyr-scarred bishops at the Council of Nice, that he might affix imperial sanction to the divinity of the crucified Jew! Within three hundred years the Christian community has grown from twelve Judean peasants to ten millions of baptized Roman subjects. The fiery cross of martyrdom is become the Fiery Cross of Victory.

The City of Constantine.—The city of Constantinople remains a monument to this transformation. True, the great political sagacity of the emperor was the prime cause of the founding of his "New Rome." He perceived that the site of ancient Byzantium, connecting, as it does, two seas and two continents, was the political centre of gravity for his whole empire. Is not the genius of his choice proved by the fact that even "The Sick Man of the East" is still able to prolong his life and rule in this capital of unequalled advantages? Then, too, his inevitable vanity was manifested in his action. Nero, equally vain, but far less fortunate, had died without leaving a new Rome, to be called "Neropolis." And yet, when all is said, we cannot forget that the ambitious emperor did, indeed, make Constantinople a distinctively Christian city. "Here, instead of idol temples and altars, churches and crucifixes rose; and the smoke of heathen sacrifices never rose from the seven hills

of new Rome except during the short reign of Julian the Apostate."

A Sermon in Stone.—It is in old Rome, however, that we find the most eloquent monument to the growth of the magic blade. Two neighboring triumphal arches are still standing among the ruins,—one, the Arch of Titus; the other, the Arch of Constantine.

The Arch of Titus commemorates his destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 70, as Jesus had foretold. It means that the same soldiers that had crucified the prophet of the Jews afterwards unwittingly fulfilled His prophecies, and thereby verified His claims. It means that the power of the Jews had perished, and that Rome, by destroying the early anchorage of the little church, thenceforward linked its history with her own.

Between this Arch of Titus and the other intervene two centuries of martyr blood shed by Roman hands against the followers of Jesus. The second arch is the Arch of Constantine, built by him to commemorate the Christian victory over Rome. He was a Roman emperor, but he worshipped the despised Judean King. This monument testifies with silent eloquence that the Jew has conquered the Roman, the Roman empire is become a Christian empire, and the seed of Christ's kingdom was indeed and in truth the blood of Christ's saints.

THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE

2. THE WORM OF WORLDLINESS

The Philosophy of Persecution.—Is it possible for us to understand, in some degree, this mysterious alchemy of blood? What is the explanation of the fact that the Christian church has always thrived on persecutions, whereas it has often lost its vigor and purity in times of prosperity and peace?

(a) Dispersion.—It is doubtless true that one very simple reason for the reactionary benefits of persecutions consists in the fact that persecutions secure dispersion, and the dispersion of Christians means the dissemination of the gospel. In the book of the Acts we read of a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, so that the believers "were all scattered abroad." And then, in almost the succeeding verse, it is written, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Hence it appears that the early persecutions were directly instrumental in the further diffusion of the gospel. Those that were persecuted "went everywhere preaching the word." The word, after all, is the one true seed of the kingdom, without which this other seed of martyr blood would never exist at all. In those days every fugitive was an evangelist preaching the word. It was not, like the present, a time of the easy

and rapid communication of news. Without a dispersion, the "Good News" would have been much longer in reaching every nook and corner of the Roman empire than it actually was. And so did God make the wrath of man to praise Him.

(b) **Conviction.**—But there is a deeper reason than this for the vivifying power of persecutions. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the kingdom," chiefly because the word "martyr" means "witness;" because every martyr's death is the witness of a power which transcends fear and pain and even death itself, leading men willingly to "endure as seeing Him that is invisible," persuading them to "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The multitude looks on with awe-struck wonder, and finally perceives that it needs just such a power as this. Men, filled with "world weariness," longing for what earth cannot bestow, see in the sufferings of the saints a vital faith which fixes firmly on a life beyond, so that every martyr becomes a witness, in the fellowship of his sufferings with Christ, to the power of the resurrection of Christ, a witness to the "city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God."

(c) **Purification.** — Persecutions were also a blessing to the church in that they secured its purity, its freedom from dross. For it cannot be doubted that in the chilling blasts of the church's winter the love of many grew cold, so that hundreds fell away into the old and easy life of heathendom. This left the remaining body of Christians one of great purity and faithfulness, whose lives were to outsiders as a city set on a hill, whose light cannot be hid. Fiery trials, indeed, there were, yet the "beloved" were not to wonder concerning these fiery trials, as though "some strange thing" happened unto them. Rather were they to "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings," "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honor and glory." We find St. Paul, with his acute understanding of the philosophy of discipline, actually declaring that he took pleasure in reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake. And he writes to the troubled Thesallonians, "We also glory in you, for your faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." Their sufferings were for the good of the church, both collectively and in

its members. An old writer has summed up the spiritual benefits of persecutions in these words: "As frankincense, when it is put into the fire, giveth the greater perfume; as spice, if it be pounded and beaten, smelleth the sweeter; as the earth, when it is torn up by the plough, becometh more fruitful; the seed in the ground, after frost and snow and winter storms, springeth the ranker; the nigher the vine is pruned to the stock, the greater grape it yieldeth; the grape, when it is most pressed and beaten, maketh the sweetest wine; linen, when it is bucked and washed, wrung and beaten, is so made fairer and whiter,—even so the children of God receive great benefit by persecution; for by it God washeth and scoureth, schooleth and nurtureth them, that so, through many tribulations, they may enter into their rest."

Therefore our Lord said, when preaching on the mountain, in a beatitude which was at once a prophecy and a promise, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." There is the relationship of cause and effect between the unequalled persecutions of the early church and the fact that never since that day has she worn such shining, spotless garments, being fitly adorned as the bride of the Heavenly Bridegroom. She had made her garments white in blood.

The Church at Peace.—Now, our Lord said also to His disciples, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets," distinctly implying that when persecutions utterly cease, the church has need to look to herself, lest she be found to be false to the truth. And is not the need of this warning sadly justified by the results that followed upon the sudden transition, under Constantine, from persecution and poverty to prosperity and power? The triumphant emperor, especially in his later days, did little credit to the faith he defended and confessed. The bravery of his youth degenerated into cruelty, and his ambition into rapacity; while the vanity that had been merely amusing in the young prince became a painful and injurious thing in the aged man. Sismondi tells us that in his later days he gave way to excessive, even ludicrous vanity, decorating his head with false hair of different colors, and with a diadem covered with pearls and gems. His nature becoming suspicious, "he filled his palace with eunuchs, and lent an ear to their perfidious calumnies. He multiplied spies, and subjected palace and empire alike to a suspicious police."

The saddest characteristic of this spoiled emperor was the cruelty that stained his later records. "He poured out the best and noblest blood

in torrents, more especially of those nearly connected with himself." The most illustrious victim of his tyranny was his son Crispus, who incurred his father's jealous displeasure through his success in battle, as young David had excited the envious wrath of Saul.

The Church stumbles.—Alas! that the church itself should have been involved in the crimes of Constantine! But the truth must be told. And the truth is that deacons and bishops, not able to endure, undazzled, the sudden access of pomp which the policy of Constantine had secured for the church, became but a flock of blind flatterers, too nerveless to rebuke, or even to instruct, this vain and rapacious ruler. They fawned about him, anxious for some fat living, eager for positions of advancement, and by their cowardly silence they made the church a partaker in his crimes.

So, then, the removal of persecutions was attended by the arrival of corruption. No sooner was the emperor a "Christian" than Christianity began to be secularized. Gregory Nazianzen, a powerful preacher of a slightly later period, paints with graphic touch the worldliness that had set in. "We rest luxuriously on soft and sumptuous cushions. We are vexed with but the voice of a moaning beggar. Our chambers must breathe the breath of the rarest flowers,

Slaves must stand ready with cups and with fans. Our tables must bend with loads of costly dishes." The religion of Christ was forgotten.

For in the train of sumptuous living followed cruelty and vice. A notorious example occurred in the year 415, when a rabble of Christians in Alexandria, under the leadership of the bishop of the city, perpetrated a crime scarcely surpassed in malignant ferocity by any that Nero had devised. They tore to pieces, and in a church at that, the woman philosopher, Hypatia, and made a bonfire of the mutilated fragments! The history of the church in every age is a striking commentary on the emphatic words of Jesus, when he said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The church of Constantine had grown with magic swiftness into a mighty blade indeed, but the worm of worldliness was gnawing at its heart.

But the Church stands.—Yet, while it was a corrupted church, it was still the church, and the church victorious over paganism. As Sohm has sagaciously observed, "The marvel of Christianity and its greatest achievement is just this: that it could not be destroyed, that it won the victory although so miserably represented by its followers." God's omnipotent plan for the growth of His kingdom makes "princes" at times out of wretchedly poor material, as the whole Bible his-

tory witnesseth, from Jacob and David to St. Thomas and St. Peter. As for Constantine, the lustre of his service to the kingdom may be sadly tarnished by certain of his private vices, but it cannot be destroyed. His character is certainly "not to be imitated or admired, but much to be remembered, and deeply to be studied."

The Death of Constantine.—It is pleasing to believe that in his very last days Constantine became really a changed man, experiencing that inner transformation which he had secured externally throughout his realm. Baptized while dying at Nicomedia, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, he promised to live thenceforth as a worthy disciple of the Lord; "refused to wear again the imperial mantle of cunningly woven silk, richly ornamented with gold; retained the white baptismal robe; and died trusting in the mercy of God."

If Constantine did not live worthily as a Christian emperor, we may yet believe that he died so; and rejoice that God made "possible" the "impossible," leading at last this rich prince, who did so much to found His kingdom here on earth, into the narrow gate of the kingdom which is in heaven.

And yet his holy death could not undo the unholy influences of his life, even as his white baptismal robe might not displace the garments

of worldliness in which he had helped to deck the church. It was needful for the church to be taught a severe but wholesome lesson. This lesson came in the guise of a pagan revival.

The Pagan Revival.—Paganism itself had felt the leavening influence of Christianity. For if our Lord spoke the parable of the mustard-seed to symbolize the external growth of the church from seed to blade, He also gave that other parable of the leaven, to denote its invisible action within society at large. "It was to grow into a great outward society,—the tree of the church; but it was also to do a work on secular society as such, corresponding to the action of leaven on flour."

The working of this Christian leaven within the crude mass of pagan superstitions and myths produced a result known as the New Platonism, a reformation which called to its aid both philosophy and ethics. That is to say, this reformed school of heathendom not only transmuted the ancient mythologies into a sort of theosophy, or philosophy of natural religion, but also added a strenuous moral code, largely borrowed from the tenets of the new faith. It was precisely the same result that Christianity is now effecting upon Buddhism in the Far East. And as then, so now, the movement will prove to be but the death-throe of the pagan system.

The new Platonism took advantage of the prevailing corruption of the Constantinian church, and thousands of cultured, conservative Romans rallied at first to its standards. The most powerful of these was the emperor Julian, a nephew of Constantine, whose three unworthy sons had waged a fratricidal war for the succession. Constantius, the eventual victor, and a nominal Christian, did more than his father to corrupt and shame the Christian church, going so far as to persecute those who would not confess the cross.

Julian, educated as a Christian, in his heart zealously espoused the cause of the new Platonism. This espousal at length developed into a perfect frenzy of devotion. When, in 361, he took the field against his cousin Constantius, the ambition of the powerful young soldier was not for himself so much as for the honor of the gods. His rival's death occurring opportunely, the new emperor's immediate endeavor was to restore heathenism to its ancient place of splendor. In fact, the eighteen months of his remarkable reign were given to little else. Becoming a high priest of Apollo, he sacrificed in person, morning and evening, to the sun-god, to which deity he also made daily offerings of hundreds of bulls, amid the chanting of heathen priests and the religious dances of heathen women. An ascetic,

he lived chastely and with severe simplicity, sleeping on the floor, boasting of his unkempt appearance, and occupying whatever leisure remained from his purely religious duties with either the writing of polemics or the devisement of designs against the Christians. These he removed from office, oppressed with taxes, deprived of education and from the right of judicial trial, and, in a word, subjected to the most burdensome afflictions, while Christian images were carefully effaced from the coins and removed from all the standards of the empire.

This zeal against the Christians was accompanied by a corresponding ardor in behalf of their enemies, whether pagan Romans or orthodox Jews. For the emperor conceived it to be his highest duty, as a religious devotee, to discredit the Galilean superstition at all hazards, and by every means within his power.

The most striking feature of this policy was Julian's unsuccessful attempt to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. His design in this was to destroy the popular confidence in the prophecies of Christ. Accordingly he called to his aid the patriotic enthusiasm of the Jews, who, with his own men, labored for the restoration of the splendid building destroyed by the soldiers of Titus. Jewish women, it is said, actually turned

their ornaments into silver spades and shovels, working with their own hands, and using their silken aprons as hods for the sacred soil. But repeated attempts were utterly unsuccessful, as the apostate himself confesses; the pagan historian, Marcellinus, recording that " fearful balls of fire broke out near the foundations, continuing their attacks until they made the place inaccessible to the workmen, who, after repeated scorchings," were forced to give up the attempt. Concerning this testimony of Marcellinus, the sceptical Gibbon confesses that " such authority should satisfy a believing, and must astonish an incredulous mind." And Gibbons adds that " an earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundations of the temple," are attested by more than one contemporary and trustworthy witness.

Christianity Triumphant.—The brilliant, sincere, but deluded monarch died in the thirty-second year of his age, the later Christian historians reporting that his last words were, " Galilean, thou hast conquered!" These words, whether uttered by Julian or not, express the exact truth. For after his death the line of Christian emperors continued unbroken, and the church, restored once more to its full authority, gave all too little heed to the moral significance of the " pagan revival." Neoplatonism grad-

ually dwindled away, and at length, in the year 388, under Theodosius the Great, the stubbornly conservative senate consented to degrade Jupiter Capitolinus by a formal vote, so that the last outward vestige of heathenism was forever banished from imperial Rome. The influence of the pagan philosophies, however, passed over into the church, determining to this very day the form and style of the Christian theology.

3. DEVELOPMENT

(a) Doctrine. — This influence especially appears in the development of the doctrine of the early church. For no sooner did the church find leisure from persecutions, than its learned leaders began to give their studious attention to the teachings of the sacred writings of the New Testament, most of which were recognized as inspired Scripture from the beginning, though not collected into their final form until during the fourth century.

The one great subject that enchained attention from the first was the problem of the nature of our Lord. For the doctrine of God in the flesh is the supreme mystery of the Christian religion, into which all others readily resolve themselves. The same question that came to the first disciples came also to these: "Whom say ye that I am?" He was unquestionably the Son of

David, a real human being, whom men had heard, and seen with their eyes, and their hands had handled. How, then, could He be also David's Lord, the true God, the Lord of Hosts? And yet, when Peter had confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus had blessed him, and called his confession nothing less than a revelation direct from heaven. Here, indeed, is a mystery.

First Council (A.D. 325).—Very early, men were found to declare that "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" The denial of our Lord's divinity gained such strength during the time of Constantine that, as we have seen, it threatened to disrupt the church.* But the Council of Nice repelled the followers of Arius, who taught that while the Second Person of the Trinity may be designated as God in some sense, yet He is not God "in any really true sense, because He is not eternal, and there was, therefore, a time when He did not exist."

Second Council (A.D. 381).—No sooner had the Council of Nice declared its belief in the perfect Godhead of the Lord, than the church was confronted with an error that had its origin in an extreme reaction against Arianism; that is, the denial, by Apollinaris and his followers, not

* See page 72.

of the divinity of Christ, but of His humanity! Therefore, just as the Nicene Council had asserted His true divinity, so a second general council was called, under Theodosius, at Constantinople, and decreed its faith in His complete humanity.

Third Council (A.D. 431).—But, if Christ be both God and man, how is the union of the two natures in the one Person to be explained? Nestorius advanced the simple theory that God unites Himself to all men in proportion to their merit; but to the Christ-Man in an unusual degree, because of His unusual merit. Jesus, while really a human child, became the true adopted Son of God. A third general council, convoked at Ephesus in 431, rejected this doctrine, affirming over against it that the divine nature of our Lord took to itself the human nature at the time of the miraculous conception by the Spirit.

Fourth Council (A.D. 451). — In that case, argued Eutyches, then His humanity must have lost its true nature, being absorbed by His divinity. But against this view the fourth general council, at Chalcedon, affirmed that the Saviour, being one Person, is yet of two distinct natures, inseparable, but not commingled. "In Him the two natures, divine and human, subsist in the unity of the one Person."

Fifth and Sixth Councils (A.D. 553 and 680). —The fifth and sixth councils, held at Constantinople, still further established and defended the formal statement of the doctrine of the incarnation against the attacks of the rationalists, thus affording for all time a solid foundation for the great central truths of Christianity, in a manner that would have been impossible, humanly speaking, without the influence and assistance of Greek philosophic thought. A great historian has beautifully written, "What is truly great, and noble, and beautiful, can never perish. The classic literature had prepared the way for the gospel in the sphere of natural culture, and was to be turned thenceforth into a weapon for its defence. The word of the great apostle of the Gentiles was here fulfilled: 'All things are yours.' This is the noblest, the most worthy, and most complete victory of Christianity, transforming the enemy into friend and ally."

The great intellectual leaders of the church during this period of doctrinal development were Athanasius (296-373) and John Chrysostom (347-407) in the East, with Ambrose (340-397), Jerome (340-420), and Augustine (354-430) in the West. By far the greatest of these was Augustine, bishop of Hippo, whose influence upon the development of the church has perhaps been equal to that of all the councils

combined. With Paul and Luther, he is the middle link in the living chain that has bound the church fast to the great anchor-doctrine of justification by faith. On the other hand, he magnified the authority of the organized church to large proportions; and so united in himself, as one has pointed out, the two opposed ideas that were destined to result in Protestantism on the one hand and Catholicism on the other.

(b) **Form.**—This idea of the glory and authority of the church as an institution developed into large proportions from the time of Constantine downward. The union of church and state, which dates from his day, naturally had a powerful effect in the direction of a more complex organization of the church. Naturally, too, the church would borrow the form of its organization from the state itself. If early Christendom was indebted to the Greek classics for the spirit of its inner philosophy, it owed quite as much to the Roman state for the form of its outward laws. Terse and forcible testimony is borne to this fact to-day by the invariable incorporation of the word "Roman" with the name of the "Catholic" church, whose form of government is indeed a literal and exact survival of the superbly effective organization of the ancient Roman state.

Birth of the Papacy.—For a time the Roman emperor lorded it over the heritage of God, claiming, in return for the imperial patronage, the old rights of the *pontifex maximus,* or supreme pontiff of religion. But the organism bequeathed by the state to the church at length became strong enough to assert its independence. That is to say, the natural result of the grafting of Roman law on the Christian church was the birth of an ecclesiastical imperialism known as the papacy; and the papacy soon grew sufficiently strong to dispute supremacy with the emperors themselves.

It was the bishopric that afforded foundation for the structure of the papacy. Bishops had existed even in apostolic days, when James was bishop of Jerusalem. The word is simply the abbreviated Greek term for "overseer," and is used in the New Testament interchangeably with "pastor" and "elder," or presbyter. The bishop was at first simply the overseer of a single congregation, or of several congregations in the same locality, like many of our country pastors to-day. Gradually, however, in imitation of the Roman provincial system, the bishops of the larger cities began to exercise jurisdiction over the bishops of an entire territory; and, by a natural growth, a pre-eminence was finally allowed to the two church dignitaries of Rome

and Constantinople, the twin capitals of the empire.

East and West.—Then it was not long before jealousies arose between these heads of the bicephalous church. Their strife finally culminated, during the eleventh century, in the Great Schism, whereby the Greek church and the Roman church remain separate unto this day.* But long before that time it became evident that the bishop of

* The *causes* leading to this division were threefold,—(1) Political rivalry between the Eastern and Western empires. (2) Ecclesiastical rivalry between patriarchs and popes. (3) Temperamental differences between Orientals and Occidentals. The *steps* leading to the schism were also three,—(1) Seventh century. The Quinisext Council at Constantinople, dominated by Greek influence, promulgated certain disciplinary canons opposed to Roman usages, which the Pope promptly suppressed in the West. This gave definite expression to dissensions already existing. (2) Ninth century. The Pope and the patriarch quarrelled, their quarrel occasioning doctrinal disputes, especially concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit, and resulting in mutual excommunications. (3) Eleventh century. Another fierce quarrel occurred between patriarch and Pope, concerning questions of discipline; the church finally took sides, and the breach opened, the numerical strength being about equally divided. The Eastern church from that time to the present has led a singularly passive existence, in marked contrast with the virile activity of its rival in the West. To-day its greatest strength consists in the fact that it is the state church of Russia. It will undoubtedly be heard of again in the future, as that mighty empire unfolds its profound designs.

Rome had secured the larger powers, and was correctly called the Papa, or Pope, of the church.

Why Rome prevailed.—This achievement of Rome was due to many and complex causes. But the prime cause, perhaps, lies in the fact that the bishops of Rome have always insisted with strong emphasis on the divinely authorized primacy of Peter (see Matthew xvi. 18, 19), and have contended that he was the first bishop of Rome, of whom they, therefore, are the lawful successors. The rapid development of Western monasticism into a vast and active organization, whereas the monks of the East remained ascetic and quiescent, supplied the popes with a large and well-ordered school for the demonstration of this doctrine. Nor have they ever failed to take full advantage of whatever historical circumstances might serve to dignify their authority or to increase their power.

Growth of the Papacy.—These opportunities proved to be many and great. Rome was the Eternal City; *the* City, beyond all others. All of the magic associations of power clustered naturally about that name. The other bishops, when puzzled by doctrinal or executive problems, looked, as a matter of course, to Rome as the seat of authority. Athanasius, for example, could scarcely have made good his triumph over Arius had he not appealed to Rome. And the

triumph of Athanasius was therefore the triumph of his Roman sponsor. The bishop of Rome became thereby the victorious leader of orthodoxy.

Innocent I. (402-417).—The tone of the papal letters of advice gradually ceased to be advisory, becoming arrogant and mandatory. Finally, Innocent I. laid it down as a rule that all churches ought to follow the usages of Rome, and his successor went so far as to declare the authority of the Roman see to be such that none might question its judgments.

Leo I. (440-461).—It only remained for Leo the Great to assume to be the "Vicar of Christ," without whose jurisdiction there is no salvation; and the doctrine of the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome in spiritual matters could be carried little farther. The mediæval bull known as the "Unam Sanctam"* merely enounced what Leo had long ago implied and enforced, —with its bold "We declare, affirm, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for salvation that every human creature should be subject to the Roman pontiff."

Gregory I. (590-604).—But if Leo the Great established the doctrine of the spiritual supremacy of the popes, it was reserved for Gregory the

* See page 174.

Great to provide for the extension of this supremacy to temporal matters. By this time the popes had become large landowners in many parts of the empire; and to possess lands was in those days to possess power. Moreover, the fact that the emperor lived at Constantinople made the Roman bishop the practical protector of the people against hordes of barbarians that now swarmed over Italy. Many a time was the Pope called on to play the part of emperor to the defenceless people of Rome. Gregory, a great and good man, zealous only for the glory of the church, seized these opportunities for her advantage, thus making himself and his successors the monarchs of an ecclesiastical Rome, which came in the end to be mightier than the State itself.*

Such was the outcome of the movement begun by Constantine. The church that had conquered the emperor's person now conquers the emperor's office. He had put the weapon of worldliness into her hand, and she shows that she knows how to use it. The papacy is Rome's gift to the church, as philosophy was the gift of Greece. And, precisely as philosophy was utilized for the development of Christian theology, so, doubtless, we shall see that the papacy will prove to be an

* See page 149.

essential instrument in governing the barbaric hordes that might conquer Rome, but could by no means conquer the church.

(c) **Missions.** — Roman Christianity had indeed begun the conquest of the tribes long before Alaric opened the Salarian gates. This is strikingly indicated by the fact, noted by all historians, that the savage Goth showed peculiar reverence for the property of the Christian churches. The remarkable development succeeding the age of Constantine had been not only intensive, but extensive as well. The missionary spirit of St. Paul had descended upon the church, which continued his work of evangelizing "the regions beyond" with a zeal worthy of such an illustrious example.

The Goths.—The introduction of Christianity among the Goths seems to have begun while they were still on the northern side of the Danube and the Black Sea, resulting, no doubt, from the devotion of Christian captives, many of whom had been snatched away into slavery among the barbarians. But it was not until the fourth century that a missionary was ordained to the Gothic tribes, in the person of Ulfilas, an Arian, who labored as their bishop with great success for forty years, though not without discouragement, and even persecution. Reducing their language to written form, he produced the first mis-

sionary translation of the Scriptures, which was powerfully influential in Christianizing the whole body of the Goths, and their nearest neighbors likewise.

The Irish.—The Irish, like the Goths, were also turned to the Christian faith by the efforts of devout slaves,—Patrick and Bridget, who, in reward for their labors, were afterwards made the patron saints of a grateful people. The lad, who was a shepherd slave, managed at one time to make his escape into France; but a religious dream, somewhat like that of Paul with the Macedonian, led him back to the country of his bondage, where he filled fifty years with arduous labors in behalf of the church. So much legend clusters about the name of his feminine successor that the most we can say of her is that she was undoubtedly an important agent in the conversion of the natives of Ireland.

The Scotch. — Evangelized Ireland sent an apostle to Scotland,—Columba, who landed in the year 563 on the inhospitable island of Iona, with twelve missionary companions, who labored with him in untiring zeal for the conversion of the savage Scotch. "He was manly, tall, and handsome, incessantly active, and had a sonorous and far-reaching voice, rolling forth the Psalms of David, every syllable distinctly uttered." Bede says that "he converted by example as well as

by word." Dying beside the altar, while engaged in his midnight devotions, the personality of this heroic Celt stands out as one of the most picturesque figures in the missionary history of the church.

Britain.—But the most romantic story of all has to do with the conversion of the English. The Britons had received the gospel very early in the history of the church; for Tertullian, in the year 208, wrote that "places in Britain not yet visited by the Romans were already subject to Christ." This early church, however, was almost killed by the conquests of the Teutons in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the Christianization of the new Anglo-Saxon race was destined to come from Rome.

The English.—Bede tells us that the abbot Gregory, who afterwards became the great pope of that name, while walking one day through the slave-market at Rome, was struck with the beauty of three fair Anglo-Saxon youths. Learning, to his grief, that these sweet-faced lads were heathen, he asked the name of their race. "They are Angles," was the reply. "Right!" rejoined the quick-witted abbot; "for they have angelic faces, and are worthy to be heirs with the angels of heaven. Whence come they?" When told that they came from the province of Deira, he exclaimed, "They are, indeed, *de irans,*

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plucked from the ire of God!" Finally, when informed that the name of their king was Ælla, he cried, "Alleluia! for the praises of God must be sung in those parts!" Going straightway to the papal residence, he besought the Pope to send him as a missionary to England, and actually started for the spiritual conquest of that distant island. But, being recalled by the voice of his people, who raised him to the papal chair, he yet did not forget the fair-haired lads, and in the year 596 sent a party of thirty-two missionaries, headed by the abbot Austin, to the realm of one of the rulers of England, King Ethelbert. The king, whose queen was already a Christian, graciously received them with the words, "Your speech and promises are very fair; but, as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot forsake the religion I so long have followed, together with the entire English nation. Yet, as you are come from far, and are desirous to help us, I will give you all needful sustenance, and not forbid you to preach, or to convert as many as you can to your faith." Some of the people soon believed, and were baptized, "admiring," Bede says, "the simplicity of their innocent lives, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine." The next year Ethelbert himself became a Christian, soon drawing his whole kingdom with him. Within a hundred years the entire heptarchy had

followed, and the church had conquered England, under the leadership of Austin, the first archbishop of Canterbury. During the eighth century the English Christians became so vigorous that they sent out to their ancestors on the continent Winfrid, who became the "Apostle of Germany."

Ancient "Germany."—"Germany" was in very early times no more than a name applied to a large and indefinite territory lying north of Italy, just across the Alps, and inhabited by races of whom the chief called themselves Cimbri and Teutones, our modern French and Germans. These made their first appearance in Italy in the year 113 B.C., greatly startling the people, as they came, "sitting on their great shields, shooting down the snow slopes of the Alps upon them." They were large, brave men, fair-haired, blue-eyed, close kinsmen of the folk who afterwards conquered England.

The French. — Eventually their lands comprised the kingdoms of the East and West Franks, loosely united under a single ruler, of whom the first was Clovis (481-511), a Western Frank, or Cimbrian. He and three thousand of his warriors became nominal Christians under Bishop Remigius, of Rheims, receiving baptism on Christmas-day of the year 496. This was the beginning of Christianity in France.

The kingdom of the East Franks gradually developed into modern Germany, though its distinctive emergence did not begin to appear until after the time of Charlemagne. The West Franks readily amalgamated, both in blood and speech, with the Italians and the Gauls, whereas their neighbors across the Rhine proved to be conservatives, maintaining the purity of their original race and language down to the present day.

The Germans.—A Presbyterian historian has said that these Teutons " were predestinated for Christianity, and Christianity for them." So also, in effect, thinks the French essayist, Taine. However that may be, it is certain that history contains few facts more wonderful than the rapid conquest, through the cross, of these conquerors of the hitherto unconquerable Romans. These strange, strong " spearmen," who would not bow the knee to any earthly king, bowed instinctively before the Heavenly King of whom the Romans told them. The subjection which they refused to the state they willingly granted to the church.

It is true that Winfrid, surnamed Boniface, found that seed had been already sown when he came from England as missionary to the Germans. The conversion of the Goths had had its effect upon these their kinsmen; but the Chris-

tianity which Ulfilas had taught was Arianism. Moreover, certain missionaries from Ireland, such as Severinus, Columbanus, and Willebrord, had preceded Boniface. Yet his labors far exceeded theirs, fairly entitling him to be called the apostle of Germany. Sacrificing brilliant prospects in England, he gave his life to this his chosen work. Between the years 718 and 755 he toiled with ceaseless devotion, meeting at last a martyr's death at the hands of the pagan Frisians, his head pillowed on a copy of the Gospels. A band of faithful followers survived him, to complete his plans, which were full of common sense. Boniface believed that the heathens could not become good Christians unless they were also civilized. Therefore he and his monks taught them to fell the trees, drain the swamps, and till the soil. "Those whom they converted they settled in cottages round their monasteries, and so, in time, these settlements grew into towns."

The most effective deed in Winfrid's career was also the most dramatic. At Geismar stood a huge oak-tree, which the heathens had deified and worshipped. They believed that whoso might harm it should certainly die. But Boniface, armed only with an axe, cut it down before their wondering eyes, unharmed. Thus he laid the axe to the root of heathendom, for their

faith fell with the oak. A beautiful legend connects this incident with the origin of the Christmas-tree.

Thus closely have the Christian destinies of Germany and England interlocked. In the fifth century the Teutons settled England; in the eighth century the English evangelized the Teutons. And we shall find them linked together again during the period of the Reformation.

III

HIDDEN EARS

BERNARD

1. A SECOND CONSTANTINE

Hermann versus Varus.—The Roman church had conquered the Germans, but the Germans now conquer Rome. This conquest had been a-preparing for centuries, the final issue being never in doubt,—never, at least, after that fateful day in the year 9, when the doughty Hermann defeated Varus in the Teutoburger forest. Augustus, half mad with grief and shame, is said to have moaned, over and over again, "O Varus, Varus! give me back my legions!" For the choice flower of the Roman army had fallen before the Frankish scythe of war.* This plaintive prayer was never answered. From that time forward, by the operation of an inexorable natural law, one witnesses the slow, resistless expulsion of the elder races from the seats of power, which henceforth are to be occupied by the virile young nations of the North. The time had come for the Romans to give way to the Franks, "the Free." Step by step, whether in

* Freeman tells us that as late as the twelfth century "the name of Frank was still used, and used, too, with an air of triumph, as equivalent to the name of German."

war or at peace, the sturdy invaders pushed their way towards the throne.

The goal was finally reached on Christmas-day of the year 800, when, in the church of St. Peter's, Pope Leo III. suddenly placed a golden crown upon the head of Charlemagne, while the Roman people shouted, "Long live Carolus Augustus, crowned of God to be the great and peaceful emperor of Rome!" By this portentous act the church of the West declared its independence of the now decadent throne at Constantinople, establishing, in mighty rivalry, "The Holy Roman Empire;" and the emperor selected was a German.

Popes and Emperors.—The popes had known good reason for their friendliness towards the Frankish rulers, almost from the time of Clovis onward. Church and state had mutual interests in the frequent wars; the Franks to strengthen their temporal power, and the popes to extend their spiritual sway throughout the continent. Karl Martel ("Charles the Hammer") did nothing less than save the whole of Europe for the Christian church, as against Islam, in the great battle which he fought in the plain between Poitiers and Tours, in the year 732. "Our churches, colleges, Christian homes, have root and nutriment to this hour in the soil soaked with the blood of those who fought eleven and a half cen-

turies ago in that fierce and fateful battle." It requires, however, the perspective of history to appreciate fully this splendid service of Karl Martel. In the eyes of the contemporary papacy, Karl's son, Pepin the Short, wrought still greater service when he wrested rich estates from the Lombards and presented them to the Pope, thus giving full warrant to the claims of papal sovereignty. And Pepin's son, Charlemagne, in subduing the Saxons to his crown, subdued them also to the cross.

The Holy Roman Empire.—So the ambitious and imaginative mind of Leo III., who, moreover, was under deep personal obligations to Charlemagne, now conceived the luminous idea of "the Holy Roman Empire." On the one hand, the West had long outgrown its allegiance to Constantinople,—an allegiance which seems to have received its final blow in the accession of a woman, Irene (733), who had deposed and blinded her own son. On the other hand, greater militant power was needed to subdue rebellious tendencies at home. The Pope saw that the time had now come for the papacy, at a single stroke, both to declare its emancipation from foreign guardianship, and to augment its strength at home. He conceived that this was to be done by the wedlock of the two ideas of Leo the Great and Gregory the Great. Of this union was

straightway born the Holy Roman Empire, a sort of Siamese twin, the emperor wielding for the church the sword of temporal power, whilst the Pope held the sword of the spirit. Had not Christ bidden His disciples buy swords? And when they answered, "Lord, behold, here are two swords," had He not said, "It is enough"? Strange as it may seem, this Scripture was actually used by Bernard of Clairvaux in vindication or the new *régime*. "Upon this text a theory was founded that Christ gave to His church, and to the Pope, as the spiritual head of His church, the two swords of spiritual and temporal power; but that, as it was inexpedient for the Pope in his spiritual capacity to wield the sword of temporal menace, he delegated it to a temporal sovereign, and that thus the Pope in sacred matters remained the spiritual ruler, whilst the emperor exercised the delegated authority in temporal matters. The Pope cut off with the sword of excommunication, and the emperor with the sword of justice."

Charlemagne.—The Pope's twin was a mighty man of valor. "His life, like his stature, was colossal." It has frequently been pointed out that with the name of no other prince has history inseparably bound up the word "great." Guizot, in his history of France, enthusiastically declares that "no sovereign, no human being, perhaps,

ever rendered greater service to the civilization of the world." He flashes like a brilliant meteor between the eleventh hour of the dark ages and their eclipsing midnight, his career made all the more splendid by these contrasts. His early life shrouded in mystery, he appears suddenly before us in all the mature majestic strength of Dürer's fanciful painting, a glorious monarch, every inch a man and a king. Gigantic and well formed, with flashing eye that betokened both unusual physical vigor and mental power, he inspired his soldiers with invincible bravery, so that in all his numerous battles he met but one defeat. He saw his brightest dreams realized, leading his people like a second Moses out of the desert of barbarism, and equipping them for future usefulness by a full code of civil and ecclesiastical laws. Some men possess ideas; others, the power to execute ideas. Charlemagne had both. Moreover, the hour was ripe for him. Hence, a genius.

His Work for Education.—The most important and most lasting work of Charlemagne was done for education. He achieved in general for the whole of Europe what Alfred shortly afterwards accomplished for England in particular. Himself little of a scholar save in his native tastes and talents, he yet laid the broad and solid foundations upon which our whole modern sys-

tem of education is built up. Not only did he found many schools throughout his empire, he even forestalled the nineteenth century by providing that in these schools there should be no distinction between the high-born and the serf. Nay, he moreover proved, by the manner in which he brought up his own family, that he believed in the higher education for women, giving to his daughters equal advantages with his sons. He made his court a centre of learning, the magnet of great scholars from all over Europe, and the seat of a library which for the times was costly and precious. His "Palace School," under the direction of Alcuin, of England, embraced in its course of study "all the branches of sacred and secular learning." He patronized music and the arts, being especially happy in his advancement of the quality of church song; and gave new and vital impulse to the development of what afterwards became the strong and musical language of France.

His Work for the Church.—In all of his work Charlemagne worked for the church. If not religious, he was none the less pious. On the point of an irreligious sword he laid the turbulent Saxon nation as a pious offering at the feet of the Pope. He unified and ordered the chaotic membership of the church, as perhaps a more truly religious man could not have done.

His two great legal works, the Capitularies and the Caroline Books, were largely connected with the advancement of the welfare of the Church, while the "Homilarium" was nothing less than a book of sermons for the church year, prepared under his direction for the stimulation of the clergy. His favorite book was Augustine's "City of God." Like Constantine, he presided over synods and directed their discussions, not even hesitating, when occasion arose, to write letters of sharp admonition to abbots, bishops, or the Pope himself. He is, in fact, the dominant figure in the church of the early middle ages, completely overshadowing, even in their own sphere, his several twin brethren of the spiritual sword.

In Charlemagne's private character there were ugly flaws. Vain, ambitious, he was also notoriously unchaste, even in an unchaste age, actually encouraging his own daughters towards dissolute lives rather than to be the settled wives of princes. Dying in his seventy-first year, he had himself entombed still seated on a royal throne, clad in gorgeous imperial robes; and the church subsequently wove about his buried head the aureole of a "saint," as it had done with his prototype, Constantine.

Charlemagne and Constantine.—It is not a forced analogy to call Charlemagne "a second

Constantine." Their characters and their careers are startlingly similar. And when we search deepest, the analogy is strongest. Precisely what Constantine did for the church in Rome during the fourth century, Charlemagne did for the church in Europe during the ninth century. Constantine lifted it from a chaos of blood, and Charlemagne from a chaos of disorder, to dominate the world. They both did this by the union of church with state, Constantine laying the foundations of a system whereto Charlemagne set the capstone. But in this system lurks some fatal flaw. Only these two emperors were great enough to uphold the imperial side of it with any show of grace, and they by overtopping the church with the state, by deluging the church with worldliness.

The Dark Ages.—After Constantine, came the pagan revival; after Charlemagne, the dark ages. For when the meteoric Charles sank into the grave, the very darkness of the grave closed over the whole of Europe. The succeeding three hundred years were as black and chill as a lengthened Arctic night. It is not only impossible to exaggerate the horror of these three centuries, especially the tenth; it is impossible to convey briefly an adequate idea of their terror and shame.

Weak rulers had much to do with it, in a

time when nerves of steel were needed to uphold the floodgates against the terrible tides of barbaric invasion,—to say nothing of the maintenance of Charlemagne's magnificent reforms. His successors were every whit as incompetent and corrupt as those of Constantine. His grandsons, like the sons of his prototype, waged fratricidal war for the succession, and finally cut the empire piecemeal. Through sheer weakness it fell loosely together again under Charles the Fat, sad travesty of Charles the Great; but after his wretched deposition all semblance of coherence vanished, at least until the time of Otho.

Barbarians.—The gates of empire were laid low before the hordes of Normans and Hungarians that poured into sunny France from the bleak North and from the barren steppes of Asia. During the ninth and tenth centuries there were no less than fifty incursions of the Northmen throughout France, which they swept as with a besom of destruction; while countless whirlwinds of the Huns devastated the whole of Europe, until the fields were actually left untilled, becoming as in primeval times the dwelling-place for numberless wild beasts, which herded in human homesteads, unafraid, and in turn less dreaded than the inhuman beasts of Huns. These were wandering shepherd tribes, natives of the north of Asia, and inhabiting the

vast plains between Russia and China. "They had no houses. They lived in tents, in which they also stabled their horses. From being constantly on horseback their legs were crooked. They were short men, broad-shouldered, with strong, muscular arms; had coarse, thick lips, straight, black, wiry hair, little, round, sloe-like eyes, yellow complexions, and sausage noses. They were filthy in their habits; their horrible ugliness, their disgusting smell, their ferocity, the speed with which they moved, their insensibility to the gentler feelings, made the Goths, with whom they first came in contact, believe they were half demons. They ate, drank, and slept on horseback. Their no less hideous wives and children followed them in wagons. They ate roots and raw meat. They seemed insensible to hunger, thirst, and cold." To complete the repulsiveness of this interesting picture from Baring-Gould, we need only add that the weapons with which these frightful folk fought were the sword, the spear, the battle-axe, and, chiefly, the terrible Tartar bows. They seemed created and equipped of Satan himself.

Barbarism.—With the coming of barbarians into the land, there was a revival of barbarism among the people. "One feels almost, in reading the foul and frightful annals, as if the ancient pagan temper, driven into the air or trod-

den into the soil before the armies of the empire, had settled back densely and heavily upon Europe, and was infecting and poisoning the very springs of spiritual life." This was true not only of the people, but also of their princes, and even of their popes. It is no figure of speech to say that the "vicars of Christ" became the devotees of Satan. Not only were Satanic rites practised at the Vatican, but the spirit of evil reigned there, the pontifical palace at one time becoming little else than "a vast school of prostitution." These are not the slanders of Protestantism. Why, indeed, should not we feel as deeply as the Roman Catholics the shame of those awful days, seeing that the church of Rome is the mother of us all? The French Catholic, Mabillon, out of many that might be cited, confesses that most of the popes of the tenth century "lived rather like monsters, or like wild beasts, than like bishops." Let us hear also from Cardinal Newman on this subject. In his "Essays Critical and Historical" he declares that "no exaggeration is possible of the demoralized state into which the Christian world, and especially the church of Rome, had fallen in the years that followed the extinction of the Carlovingian line (A.D. 887). . . . At the close of the ninth century Pope Stephen VI. dragged the body of an obnoxious predecessor

from the grave, and, after subjecting it to a mock trial, cut off its head and three fingers and threw it into the Tiber. He himself was subsequently deposed, and strangled in prison. In the years that followed, the power of electing to the popedom actually fell into the hands of intriguing and licentious Theodora and her equally unprincipled daughters. . . . Boniface VII. (A.D. 974), in the space of a few weeks after his elevation, plundered the treasury and basilica of St. Peter of all he could conveniently carry off, and fled to Constantinople. . . . Benedict IX. (A.D. 1033) was consecrated Pope, according to some authorities, at the age of ten or twelve years, and became notorious for adulteries and murders. At length he resolved on marrying his first cousin; and when her father would not consent except on the condition of his resigning the popedom, he sold it for a large sum, and consecrated the purchaser as his successor. Such are a few of the most prominent features of the ecclesiastical history of these dreadful times, when, in the words of St. Bruno, 'the world lay in wickedness, holiness had disappeared, justice had perished, and truth had been buried.'" It was a pagan revival of indefinitely greater strength and evil than that under Julian the Apostate; for then paganism was without the church, but now the church itself

is paganized. Tiberius and Caligula, those monsters of heathendom, were now outdone by the "holy fathers" of Christendom, who vied with one another in the practice of the vilest vices, the rule of the Christian church being actually called, and truthfully called, a "Pornocracy."

Despair.—The distress of the people was most profound. As though the natural terrors were not sufficiently acute, they fell into abnormal fear of the supernatural. It was believed that the end of the world was nigh. Fearful portents were seen in sky and sea. Every night men laid their weary heads upon their pillows, in dread expectation of the midnight trump of doom. Each morning the sun blanched their faces with the promise of a burning world. Nerveless, they forsook accustomed tasks, awaiting in idle cowardice the final hour. Famine fell upon the land. Greece, Italy, France, and England were involved in it. The people actually sank into the horrors of cannibalism. "Men ate earth, weeds, roots, the bark of trees, vermin, dead bodies." Mothers devoured their children, and children their mothers, in the frenzy of hunger. Men were murdered to be eaten, and human flesh was almost openly sold in the markets. "The multitude of the dead was so great that they could not be buried, and

wolves flocked to feast on their bodies. Great numbers were tumbled promiscuously into vast trenches. A state of fierce cannibal savagery appeared likely to mark the end of a fallen and ruined race, for which the Lord had died in vain. It was not wonderful that men following their dead relations to the grave sometimes cast themselves into it, to end at once their intolerable life." The Roman Catholic historian, Michelet, has dramatically pointed out that "the very statues of the period are sad and pinched, as if the dreadful apprehension of the age had sunk into the softened stone."

Such was the condition into which the Holy Roman Empire had fallen shortly after its glorious establishment by Leo III. and the meteoric Charlemagne. Such was the age upon which Bernard, the son of a feudal lord, opened his eyes in his father's castle in Burgundy, in the year 1091.

2. THE REFUGE FROM THE WORLD

In those dark and troublous times, human hearts were still to be found wherein burnt flames of heavenly aspiration. For these, the only refuge seemed to be the cloister, with its threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. There, freed from the chilling world around them, freed also from its terrible temp-

tations, these aspiring hearts thought to lay themselves upon the altar of holiness, to do spiritual service by burning in spiritual sacrifice.

The Monastic Idea.—The idea of monastic devotion is almost as old as the idea of religion itself. Wherever men have thought deeply of God,—that is to say, whenever men have become devout,—they have always tended to become also devotees, and straightway give up the world for heaven. This has been particularly true of the people of the mystical, brooding East. The ancient cult of Brahmanism, like the hoary religions of Egypt and the more modern faith of Buddha,—these have always promised great reward to those that will flee the world and live the solitary life of the spirit.

Monachism Alien to Christianity.—Monachism, in its origins, means precisely this: to live "alone," in a solitary cell, separated from the world unto God. And it is a strange illustration of the way in which Christianity has sometimes been moulded out of its divine shape by its human surroundings, that, in spite of the example of our Lord and of His precepts, the influence of human nature, aided perhaps by a tincture of the paganism of the Far East, was yet so great as to impose upon His religion as one of its chief institutions the utterly foreign idea of monasticism. It was a reproach brought

against Christ by his "religious" contemporaries that He was not an ascetic, but a wine-bibber, who mingled among the activities of publicans and sinners. He did, indeed, teach His disciples the duty of sacrifice, but it was the sacrifice of service. "He that would be chief among you," said He, let him be as "one that doth serve." True, He warned them of the evil that is in the world, and prayed that from this evil they might be kept; yet He distinguished between evil and its abiding-place, just as He distinguished between sin and the sinner. His disciples were to live in the thick of the world as a purifying power therein, the "salt of the earth." Salt does not accomplish its purpose, which is the arrest of decay, except it find lodgement in the very heart of the putrescent mass. "I pray not," are the words of the High-Priestly prayer,—"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." They were to be in the world, but not of the world.

Monastic Growth in the East.—And yet, despite both His example and His precept, the doctrine of asceticism and self-seclusion soon found a large place in the lives of His followers. His forerunner had been a hermit, and His contemporaries, the Essenes, an important religious school of the Jews, were little else than Phari-

saic monks. We find traces of a Christian asceticism in very early times. But the first clear development of it comes significantly out of Egypt, the home of the hermits. The first Christian hermit was Paul of Thebes, whose example inspired St. Anthony (251-356) to give widespread prevalence to the monastic idea; and his friend Athanasius, in turn, became "its first sponsor in the West." The Eastern monasticism, however, while it rapidly attained large proportions, has always remained consistent with the spirit of the East,—passive, inactive, contemplative, mystical, and ascetic; having as its hero the "Saint of the Pillar," Simeon Stylites, who lived for thirty-six years standing on top of a pillar, "exposed to the scorching sun, the drenching rain, the crackling frost, the howling storm, living a life of daily death and martyrdom." *

Western Monasticism.—Western monasticism, on the other hand, has developed large activities; and it is therefore solely with the Western branch that we are to be concerned as we trace the growth of the kingdom.

Pachomius, also an Egyptian, introduced the

* The historian of the Oriental church can triumphantly exclaim, "The West has never had a Simeon Stylites!" See Tennyson's "St. Simeon Stylites" for a vivid picture of the experiences of this marvellous man.

social feature into monasticism, which has given it such great powers by binding its adherents first into communities, and afterwards into general organizations. This is "convent" life proper, and in the Western church its founder may be regarded as Benedict of Nursia, who in the year 528 built the monastery of Monte Cassino, with a pattern and rule whereupon the numerous monasteries of the West were for ages uniformly fashioned. Wide diffusion was thus given to Benedict's belief in the benefits of labor as a means of discipline, instead of an ascetic idleness; and so through him monasticism became almost a new thing. Growing into an immense power, it attracted those of noble spirit into the cloister as a refuge from the world, whatever their rank or station, even leading the world's nobility to lay aside all rank and wealth for the sake of a common cowl and cell. It manifested its strength in a signal way about twenty years before Bernard was born, by imposing the law of monkish celibacy upon the entire priesthood, through the monkish Pope, the great Hildebrand, Gregory VII.

Benefits of Monasticism.—Monasticism was by no means without good results. Almighty God so overrules the mistakes of men in their clumsy work for His kingdom as to turn hinderances into eventual helps. The event has

THE BENEFICENT ASPECT OF MONASTICISM

(From Murillo's Painting of St. Anthony of Padua)

proved that for a certain stage in the development of the Christian world monachism played a very important part. "The ark described in the Biblical story could not do the work of a swift modern steamship; but in its time, according to the narrative, it had its use and served its purpose, by saving the race from the whelming flood." And, to carry out the figure, some scholars think that it was monasticism alone that saved Europe from complete destruction under the mediæval flood of barbarism. "Had it not been for monks and monasteries," says Gregory Smith, in his work on Christian Monasticism, "the barbarian deluge might have swept away utterly the traces of Roman civilization."

Development of the Individual.—The large share which monasticism had in the shaping of the kingdom of God on earth found its basis in the fact that it provided a field for the development of the individual. The papacy had soon become a huge machine, the organized church emphatically a system, for bending or crushing the individual life into conformity with an institution. In a very important philosophical sense monasticism thus stood over against the papacy, however unconsciously, as a protest and a power for the unit as against a union. This was true even in a religious way. The church,

as such, claimed the sole and supreme power of affording salvation, through its perfectly ordered system of priests and sacraments. The monks, on the other hand, were really men who left the system provided by the church, going apart into desert places that none might come betwixt them and God, while they worked out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Monasticism was thus a sort of Protestantism; and it is certainly curious to recall that not only Luther, but also his great forerunner, Savonarola, received training for the work of reform in the cloister. But, indeed, the historical watchword of monasticism has always been Progress, as must ever be the case where individualism predominates. It has already appeared, in tracing the growth of missions, how much of the geographical advancement of the church was due to the zeal of individual monks. In yet other instances this progressive zeal found an outlet through the channels of organized philanthropy.

Culture.—Monasticism provided not merely for the religious life of the individual, but also for his physical and mental development. As has been indicated, it preached and practised the gospel of labor. Because of this fact, the brothers of the cell had immense share in the agricultural progress of Europe. Entering primeval forest or barren waste, they felled the

trees, tilled the soil, planted vineyards, and literally caused the desert to blossom as the rose. During the midnight hours of the dark ages it was they alone who preserved to Europe in any considerable degree the knowledge and practice of farming. Still others of them turned their taste to music, art, and letters, laboring in the creation of beauty. "The watchword of these monasteries and nunneries was not the annihilation, but the fulfilment of individuality. It meant to have an ear, not only for psalmody, but for the music of the heroic songs of Germany; to have an eye not only for letters, the rudiments of learning, but for painting, with the splendor of its sensuous charm, that looked not only to art, but to nature; nay, more, it meant to have a heart not only for the Latin of Virgil, but for our wonderful, scarce-discovered German mother-tongue, which became, as it were, for the first time conscious of its power within the cloistered walls of St. Gallen." So it was that "the first musicians, painters, farmers, statesmen, in Europe, after the downfall of imperial Rome under the onslaught of the barbarians, were monks." So, also (to anticipate), it is unquestioned that Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar of the thirteenth century, is the pioneer of modern science, just as his great contemporary, Thomas Aquinas, represented the

old school of scholastic theology in a manner worthy of its highest traditions.

The Height of Monastic Influence.—This same thirteenth wonderful century, which Frederic Harrison deems one of the most fruitful in human history, witnessed the rise of the great orders of the beggar friars, Franciscans, and Dominicans,* who with sudden impetuous zeal transfused new life throughout the Catholic world, but speedily fell into disorganization and ill repute. It was during that brief but brilliant period that monasticism attained its widest sway, by sweeping the hitherto neglected middle classes into the pale of the militant church, leaving an influence in this direction which long survived the decline of the orders themselves.

Three great institutions of the church were brought to their consummation during the middle ages,—the papacy, monasticism, and scholasticism. The papacy had been largely dependent upon monasticism for its foundations, and now in mediæval times finds therein the real sources of its worldly power.

Scholasticism.—And as for scholasticism, it was borne bodily out of the cloister. Ueberweg

* Dominic Guzman and Francis of Assisi were nobles who freely sacrificed themselves for the welfare of the church, the latter leading a life of self-denying devotion which rivals the saintly career of Bernard of Clairvaux.

defines it as philosophy in the service of theology. Then the men who did the harnessing were monks. We have already seen how, as even Lecky confesses, the monastery "became the one sphere of intellectual labor, and continued during many centuries to occupy that position." This intellectual industry was frequently prodigious. Newman says that one monk copied a thousand volumes in less than fifty years, while "Jerome, a monk in an Austrian monastery, wrote so great a number of books that it is said a wagon with six horses would scarcely suffice to draw them."

Anselm.—Anselm (1033-1109) it was, however, who turned this great stream of industry from the channel of transcription into that of origination, or from a mere enjoyment of the intellectual work of others towards the creation of the distinctive monastic product of scholasticism. He may, therefore, be regarded as the proper founder of scholasticism. While affirming vehemently that faith must always precede knowledge, Anselm yet believed that reason should be employed as the handmaid of religion, towards the demonstration of the truth of our belief. The result was that he began the construction of a scientific theology upon the basis of the naked dogmas of the church. His greatest work, "Cur Deus Homo?" was a vig-

orous essay on the vicarious atonement, in which he so thoroughly exhausted his theme that scarcely any new strength has been added to his argument down to the present day. Anselm was called from the monastery of Bec in the year 1093 to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, where he had large share in directing those influences that resulted in the freedom of the Church of England from the yoke of the Norman crown and its corresponding subjection to the papacy.

Abélard.—But the greatest of the schoolmen was the monk Abélard, who carried the scholastic principle straight to its conclusion, reversing the "Believe in order to understand" of Anselm, into a bold "Understand in order that thou mayest believe!" thus taking his position as the full-armored champion of reason, by giving knowledge precedence over faith. "For," said he, "no one can believe that which he does not comprehend, and it is absurd to set out to preach to others concerning things which neither those who teach nor those who learn can understand."

His Mental Attitude.—Abélard, the most brilliant example of monkish scholasticism, thus lifted the first voice in behalf of individual liberty of thought; in him the individualist spirit of monachism evolved prematurely into articu-

late utterance. But the church had its spokesman in the person of Bernard, and the two great opposed ideas of the individual and the system finally engaged in splendid duel in the person of the greatest thinker and the greatest orator of their time.

Pierre Abélard is the most brilliant and most tragic figure in the history of the church. The wealth of his knightly family provided his youth with the tutelage of the great nominalist, Roscellin, whose influence forever fixed the cast of his brilliant mind. The conflict of nominalism with realism, that is to say, of the rationalist with the mystic, of Aristotle against Plato, forms the moving power in the whole history of scholastic philosophy. Abélard proved to be such an apt disciple of Aristotelianism that when he afterwards studied dialectic in Paris, under the Platonist, William of Champeaux, he gave "infinite trouble with his subtle objections, and not seldom got the better" of his master.

His Fame.—Having become at last an accomplished adept in the use of William's own weapons, he drove his erstwhile master in merciless triumph from his chair in the university, himself becoming the cynosure of intellectual Europe and the very idol of the city of Paris. Notwithstanding the tumult of the times, so unfavorable to the pursuit of scholarship, more

than five thousand pupils shortly gathered around his chair from every quarter of the continent. The close of the century in which he labored found the university numbering its pupils as ten thousand instead of a few hundred, while Paris itself had grown from a town of insignificant proportions to a "city of two hundred thousand souls, walled, paved, with several fine buildings and a fair organization." Far and away the chief agent in this wonderful municipal development was the magnetic personality of Abélard, whose mind, in point of sheer keenness and brilliancy, stands almost alone in the intellectual annals of the more modern world. Before he was forty years old he had reached the highest academic position in Christendom, finding himself the centre of a life such as the world had not witnessed since the palmiest days of Athens.

Héloïse.—Then it was that Nemesis crossed his pathway in the guise of a gentle girl. Hitherto absorbed in mental pursuits, the scholar had given no thought to love. But now he suddenly became infatuated with the eighteen-year-old niece of a canon named Fulbert, in whose house he quickly contrived to find lodgings. The student was soon lost in the lover. Day after day a murmuring throng was turned away untaught, while Abélard's melodious voice could be heard

through Fulbert's window, tremulous with the songs of an ardent love.

It was the world-old story of Faust and Gretchen. Marriage, under the laws and customs of those days, would have been fatal to Abélard's prospects,—a consideration of greater importance to the unselfish Héloïse than even her own fair name. "She asked," he writes, "what glory she would win from me, when she had rendered me inglorious and had humbled both me and her. How great a punishment the world would inflict on her if she deprived it of so resplendent a light; what curses, what loss to the church, what philosophic tears, would follow such a marriage! How outrageous, how pitiful it was, that he whom nature had created for the common blessing should be devoted to one woman, and plunged in so deep a disgrace! Profoundly did she hate the thought of a marriage that would prove so humiliating and so burdensome in every respect to me."

To appease the wrath of her uncle, however, Héloïse finally consented to a strictly secret marriage, although "weeping and sobbing vehemently." Fulbert straightway broke his faith and divulged the marriage. Whereupon, when questioned by the curious, the young wife, thoughtful only of her husband's welfare, denied the report absolutely! Abélard weakly con-

nived in this denial by removing her from Paris to the convent of Argenteuil; whereupon her infuriated relatives wreaked vengeance upon him in an unspeakably shameful manner, that left him forever a crushed and broken man.

Veil and Cowl.—Ordering Héloïse to take the veil at Argenteuil, he himself sought seclusion in the monastery of St. Denis. But his students followed him. After several years of restless life at St. Denis, he endeavored to bury himself in the hermit life of the desert. But "no sooner was his place of retreat known than he was followed into the wilderness by hosts of students of all ranks, who lived in tents, slept on the ground, and underwent every kind of hardship in order to listen to him." To the establishment thus founded he gave the suggestive name of "The Paraclete," The Comforter.

His ecclesiastical enemies had long been numerous and exceeding bitter, for the brilliant monk was charged with heresy, in an age when orthodoxy was everything. These made his wrecked life a torture. Restlessly retiring from The Paraclete, he once again sought quiet, this time as abbot of the bleak monastery of St. Gildas. Upon taking this step he made over the property of his deserted establishment to the abbess Héloïse, who, with her nuns, had been turned homeless into the world through the in-

veterate hatred of her husband's foes. Here she spent the remainder of her life, surviving the unfortunate Abélard more than twenty years.

Calamities.—He was most miserable at St. Gildas. Wherever he turned, in fact, cloud upon cloud settled thick and dark before him. After nine years of painful struggle in this abbotship, he endeavored once more to find eremite retirement, and it was under such circumstances that he wrote the pitiful "Story of my Calamities." This little narrative fell into the hands of his ever faithful wife, whereupon ensued a correspondence, which, for genuine tragic pathos and human interest, is said to be without an equal in the literature of the world. For it chanced that the intellectual gifts of Héloïse were no less unusual than those which distinguished her both for beauty of person and for the unselfish devotion of her affections. Once when the French philosopher, Cousin, was asked who was the most lovable woman of history, he answered, "Héloïse, that noble creature who loved like a Saint Theresa, wrote sometimes like a Seneca, and whose charm must have been irresistible, since she charmed Saint Bernard himself."

Defeat.—After several years of troubled seclusion the tumultuous Abélard was impelled to return once more to the arena of his former tri-

umphs, at Paris; but now at length he was destined to meet the gladiator who was to put an end to his astonishing and erratic career. We have dwelt thus long upon the life of Abélard, not only because of its deep human interest, but also in order to bring out the complete contrast between him and the only man that ever vanquished him, the ascetic Abbot of Clairvaux. After his defeat the condemned and excommunicated Abélard found final asylum in the hospitable abbey of Cluny. After two years of humble prayer and penance, he died, broken-hearted, at the age of sixty-three. Although despised and outcast then, the development of subsequent centuries has shown that in many of his fundamental positions he was simply in advance of his age, the keenness of his penetration piercing a future which to less brilliant eyes was veiled.

Abélard's Character.—His character has been well summed up by Thomas Davidson. "He was one of the most brilliant and variously gifted men that ever lived, a sincere lover of truth and champion of freedom. But, unfortunately, his extraordinary personal beauty and charm of manner made him the object of so much attention and adulation that he soon became unable to live without seeing himself mirrored in the admiration and love of others.

Hence his restlessness, irritability, craving for publicity, fondness for dialectic triumph, and inability to live in fruitful obscurity; hence, too, his intrigue with Héloïse, his continual struggles and disappointments, his final humiliation and tragic end. Not having conquered the world, he cannot claim the crown of the martyr." His most recent biographer concludes with the eloquent words, "Such as he is, gifted with a penetrating mind, and led by a humanist ideal that touched few of his contemporaries, pathetically irresolute, and failing because the fates had made him the hero of a great drama and ironically denied him the hero's strength, he deserves at least to be drawn forth from the too deep shadow of a crude and unsympathetic tradition."

The Final Scene.—Legend says that when the body of the noble Héloïse was at last placed in the monolith coffin beside his own, he opened his arms and clasped her in a close embrace. In death, at least, they were not divided. The cemetery of Père Lachaise, in Paris, is continually visited by crowds of men and women who take wreaths and flowers to lay in solemn pity upon the tombs of these who loved "not wisely, but too well," and afterwards endeavored to expiate their folly by lives of the most piteous sacrifice. For them, the only refuge from the

world was in the cloister. No other shelter was offered by that dark age to souls tortured with the guilt of sin. Lonely in separation from each other, from their friends, and from God, they could only look from the prison of their convent walls towards the sweet spiritual liberty of that heavenly city whose builder and maker is God. We can imagine them, in the sunset time of their lives, chanting from their separate stations that sad "Vesper Hymn of Abélard," which voices the inner depths of spiritual longing and of earthly resignation:

"Oh, what shall be, Oh, when shall be that holy Sabbath day,
Which heavenly care shall ever keep and celebrate alway,
When rest is found for weary limbs, when labor hath reward,
When everything for evermore is joyful in the Lord!

"The true Jerusalem above, the holy town, is there,
Whose duties are so full of joy, whose joy so free from care;
Where disappointment cometh not to check the longing heart,
And where the heart in ecstasy, hath gained her better part.

"There, there, secure from every ill, in freedom we shall sing
The songs of Zion, hindered here by days of suffering,
And unto Thee, our gracious Lord, our praises shall confess
That all our sorrow hath been good, and Thou by pain canst bless."

3. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Abélard's great antagonist was born in the year 1091, in the Burgundian castle of his knightly father, Tescelin.

Feudalism.—Tescelin was a brave soldier in the service of his feudal lord, the Duke of Burgundy. The institution of feudalism speaks eloquently of the character of the age into which Bernard was born. We need not concern ourselves, indeed, with the question of its origin, which has so long been a subject of controversy among historical scholars. Undoubtedly it grew slowly out of the peculiar genius of the Germanic tribes. But feudalism, which had hitherto been marked by a very gradual growth, leaped suddenly to complete maturity in the tenth century; and the chief occasion for this hurried consummation was the chaos of the times. Self-preservation being the first law of nature, it follows that, with the decay of the empire that had served for the protection of the people, they should erect defences for themselves. And this was especially necessitated by the barbarian invasions. Feudalism was standing ready for completion as a system of defence. The principle upon which it rested is extremely simple,—the obligation of protection on the one hand, and of service on the other. Out of the operation

of this principle chivalry finally emerged, but at the period with which we are now concerned there was little of the chivalrous in feudalism. A baron would erect upon some solitary spot a towering castle, impregnable from the assaults of the fiercest enemies. About the base would be grouped the huts of the humble folk who served him, simply in return for his protecting power. As these serfs possessed no sort of guarantee of rights, they were constantly subjected to the oppression of a master whose native roughness was made the more uncouth and cruel by his despotic powers. Frequently these masters became little else than robbers, living by lust and pillage, their servitors doing the part of hireling brigands. Voltaire has sketched the picture at a stroke. "Each castle became the capital of a little kingdom of brigands, in the midst of desolate towns and depopulated fields." Dr. Storrs says that no other testimony appears to him so impressive of the awful evil and peril of the times as does the fact that this enormous and oppressive establishment was the only barrier that Europe could raise against barbarism and paganism when Charlemagne's plans had failed of success.

Tescelin.—Tescelin, however, belonged to the better class of the barons,—to that rare class of mediæval people of whom Luther speaks in

his Commentary on the Galatians. "Some there were," he says, "who walked in simplicity and humbleness of heart, thinking the monks and friars, and such only as were anointed of bishops, to be religious and holy, and themselves to be profane and secular, not worthy to be compared unto these." Contemporary accounts agree that Tescelin was a just man, a brave though modest soldier, a real knight.

Aletta.—But the sweet lady Aletta was the parent to whom Bernard owed most, both for his inherited disposition and for those early influences which inclined him ever afterwards to desire the attainment of the beauty of holiness. This beauty was strikingly exemplified in her saintly life. Having been deterred by her parents from entering the only "refuge from the world" provided by her age, upon becoming a wife she introduced a sort of monastic rule into her own household, which she made a centre of beneficence and general kindliness. She frequently went out from her castle in humble ministry among the poor, doing for the needy and the thankless all menial tasks, not ashamed to become "the servant of all," even of her own servants. And yet she did by no means, in a mistaken zeal, forget the affairs of her own household. In a time when it was the custom for noble ladies to give the keeping of their

children into inferior hands, she insisted upon mothering her own brood of seven, "believing that with the mother's milk somewhat of the mother's spirit might be infused." These children she devoutly dedicated to the service of God, and especially believed that her third son, Bernard, would some day become a fearless champion of the truth, as, indeed, he did. Who shall say that this result was not in great measure due to his knowledge of his devout mother's reiterated faith? She died while Bernard was still a lad. Repeating with her final breath the beautiful prayers of the litany for the dying, after her voice had failed and broken she yet used her last atom of strength to trace with wan hand the figure of the Saviour's cross. Many times in his writings does the great abbot reveal the tenderest reverence for the memory of this holy mother of his youth, whose influence through him on the world cannot be estimated.

The Youthful Choice.—The lad grew into a young manhood of singular and delicate beauty. Fair-haired, tall, and slender, "with wonderful dove-like eyes," the rich endowments of his mind and character were eloquently portrayed by the corresponding dowry of his person. Bright pathways opened before him in different directions. With splendid qualities of leader-

ship and with marked magnetism of manner, he could easily have become great either as a soldier or as a statesman. Besides, there were the schools, and the church, with promise of elegant leisure and rich emolument in either. But from all of these starry paths the young noble turned resolutely away, choosing the path to the cloister. He had yet to learn that the prevalent practice of convent life was very different from its theory. To him the life of a monk meant the life of a truly religious devotee. Desiring to consecrate all of his powers to God, the highest means he knew to that end was sacrifice, penance, meditation, prayer; the immersion of his human nature, through strict self-mortification, into mystical communion with the Divine.

Citeaux.—So absorbed was the young Bernard in the glory of this idea, and so great was his gift of persuasive speech, that he succeeded in inducing thirty other young men, including all five of his own brothers, to accompany him into the monastery of Citeaux, which he entered at the age of twenty-two. He might as easily have entered the famous and wealthy monastery of Cluny, where he would have been received with open arms and extended honors; but with characteristic intensity of spirit he chose rather this poor and bleak establishment, which had

been in existence for only fifteen years. "To rise at two o'clock in the morning and chant the prayer-offices of the church until nine; to do hard manual labor until two, when the sole meal of the day was taken; to labor again until nightfall and sing the vespers until an early bed-time hour,—such was the Cistercian's daily observance of his vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience." Yet even these austere exercises did not satisfy Bernard's spiritual enthusiasm, who greatly enfeebled his body by superfluous exercise of the most strenuous discipline. The example of his pious life was soon felt beyond the circle of his immediate acquaintance, and the little monastery became so crowded that before two years had passed as many "swarms" had been sent out to found new abbeys. He himself, at the early age of twenty-four, was chosen as leader of the third party, consisting of twelve young monks, representing the twelve apostles, "while Bernard at the head, bearing the cross, and leading in a solemn chant, was to them in the place of the Master."

Clairvaux.—The young abbot led his devoted followers nearly a hundred miles into the heart of a wild, sombre, chilly forest, the valley of Clairvaux, known also as "The Valley of Wormwood." After years of the most patient toil, the industrious monks transformed this

wilderness into a nest of rich rural beauty, wherein with their own hands they had built a complete monastical establishment; but "the privations which they suffered while performing such labor nearly pass the bounds of belief." For many years their only food was barley bread, with broth made from boiled beech-leaves. Their leader's asceticism was at all times most extreme. His body wore to the thinness of a spectre. Such was the cruelty of his self-inflicted penances that his life became that of a wretched invalid, "not having health enough in a year to suffice an ordinary man for a week." He so crucified the senses as to completely lose the power of taste, drinking oil instead of water without knowledge of the difference, and being unable to distinguish between the flavor of butter and raw blood. Only once was he forced by his friends, and then almost with violence, to leave his abbey for rest and recuperation, dwelling alone for a year in a mean hut by the highway, where a visitor found him "exulting as in the joys of Paradise." "He was not alone, for God was with him, and the guardianship of holy angels." Bernard remained abbot of Clairvaux until his death at the age of sixty-two, steadily refusing numerous offers of advancement. Under his direction the monastery became always larger in numbers and wider in

influence. "Colonies went from it in large numbers, an average of more than four in each year, into different countries; its fame for holiness, wisdom, and the highest exhibition of the virtue and grace of monastic life rapidly filled Christian Europe."

Monastic Abuses.—There was sad need for such an exhibition among the monasteries. We have his own biting description of the abuses prevailing at Cluny. "Nothing is done about the Scriptures, nothing for the salvation of souls. The jaws are as much occupied with dainties as the ears are with nonsense, and, wholly intent upon eating, you know not moderation in it. As to water, what can I say, when no one takes water, even mixed with wine? As soon as we become monks, we all have infirm stomachs, and do not neglect the needed injunction of the apostle about taking wine,—only, I know not on what ground, omitting the 'little' which his precept contains!" At the same period, the sobered Abélard, entering the abbey of St. Denis, described it as a place "of very worldly and most disgraceful life." The condition of St. Gildas was even worse. Each "celibate" monk actually had a wife and family living on the monastic estate. "The outlying farms and cottages were colonized with the women and the little monklings," says Father McCabe;

"there was no cemetery of infant bones near St. Gildas." As for the nuns, Abélard's sermon on "Susannah" gives a frightful impression of the ordinary nunnery of his times. It is surely a striking testimony to the intrinsic power of righteousness that in an age when even the resorts of holiness had become veritable dens of iniquity, Bernard should be able to rule prince and pope and people by the sheer strength of his saintly spirit and the force of his consecrated will.

Bernard's Power: William of Aquitaine.—There are many evidences of his marvellous power over evil men. Perhaps the most striking was his experience with William, Duke of Aquitaine, "a man of vast stature and of almost gigantic strength, handsome and haughty, with a peculiarly violent, sensual, and intractable temper." In his anger he was like some ferocious beast, and woe to the creature that crossed him! Displeased with certain of the bishops in his feudal domains, he had deposed them from their sees. Bernard, in two interviews, had failed to make any impression upon the duke,—it was "almost like reasoning with a tropical storm." Especially was William infuriated with the Bishop of Poitiers, having sworn a mighty oath never to return him to his throne. One day, during the celebration of the mass, Bernard

perceived the intractable count standing near the door of the church. After the consecration of the host, he took the paten in his hand, and, advancing upon the astonished ruffian, with uplifted arm and flashing eye, addressed him with the words, "We have besought you, and you have spurned us. This congregation of the servants of God, meeting you elsewhere, have entreated you, and you have despised them. Behold, here cometh to you the Virgin's Son, Head and Lord of the church which you persecute! Your Judge is here, at whose Name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth! Your Judge is here, into Whose hands your soul is to pass! Will you spurn Him, also? Will you despise Him, as you have despised His servants?"

A dread silence succeeded these burning words. Then the great lord, his stubborn spirit suddenly crushed and broken, fell grovelling and humbled at the feet of this ghost-like creature, whom he could have slain with less exertion than Bernard must have expended in the plucking of a tendril from one of his grape-vines at Clairvaux. Beckoning William to his feet, the fearless little abbot bade him kiss the deposed bishop and give him back his throne. This he meekly did; and so powerful was the impression

of that hour that the terrible soldier devoted himself thenceforward to a humble religious life, dying at last while on a penitential pilgrimage.

His Power with the Popes.—The Abbot of Clairvaux lived at a time when the papacy was attaining the very acme of its temporal power. This, in effect, came to pass under the great Pope Hildebrand, Gregory VII., who in the year 1077 gave a dramatic illustration of his supremacy over the state by forcing the German emperor, Henry IV., to stand for three days barefoot in the bitter snow outside the castle of Canossa, awaiting the papal pleasure for his absolution. Yet Bernard was above the popes. The time came when the single voice of this little invalid actually decided who should sit upon the papal throne. Moreover, it was only by virtue of his prompt and fearless action at that time that Europe was saved from the bloody terrors of a religious war. There were two claimants of the papal office, arrayed and armed the one against the other. One of them, Anacletus, was a vile man, fit to succeed the worst of his infamous predecessors. But his election had been technically more regular than that of his rival, and he possessed far greater wealth and influence. This he did not hesitate to increase by robbing certain of the great churches in Rome of their priceless treasures. On the other hand,

Innocent was a man of far purer character, with the support of the better elements of the hierarchy. It seemed that Europe would certainly be plunged into a terrible religious conflict, the horrors of which it is impossible for us of this day adequately to appreciate. To avert such a catastrophe the French King, Louis VI., convened a national council, surpassing in splendid impressiveness any assemblage that could possibly be called to-day. But when the dignitaries assembled they were helpless; they knew not what to do. There was no leadership, no clearness of view, no conviction of judgment, nor boldness to act. So, what did they do? Why, these resplendent princes sent down to the secluded monastery of Clairvaux, and summoned its abbot from his penances and his work among the grape-vines, to come decide the question for them! When he spoke for Innocent, they listened as though it were the voice of God. Such is the power of a simple-hearted, strong, and unselfish holiness, even over unholy men.

His Power with Kings.—But Bernard's work was not ended when he spoke before the council in behalf of Innocent II. The other rulers of Europe must be made to acquiesce in the decision; whereas Henry of England, with many of his English bishops, and King Lothaire, of Germany, had warmly favored Anacletus. These

were proud and stubborn monarchs. But Bernard plunged upon them, with all of his intensity of righteous conviction and wonderful power of persuasive speech, and they bowed before his onslaught, bending their royal wills to the will of this invalid monk. An unknown writer has eloquently said that thus Bernard hewed a road for Innocent back to Rome, "through kings, prelates, statesmen, and intriguers, with the same unflinching steadfastness with which he had cut a way to the sunlight for his vines and vegetables in the Valley of Wormwood."

His Unselfishness.—What reward did he seek for such services? None whatever. He steadily refused all offers of preferment. For example, the people of Milan, carried away with enthusiasm for his strength and boldness, entreated him to become their archbishop. At last, to their almost violent insistence, he made the whimsical answer, "To-morrow I will mount my horse, and if he shall bear me beyond the walls, I shall hold myself free; but if he remain within the gates, I will accept the charge and be your pastor." It was the only satisfaction they could get from him, and they clutched at the straw. The next day, mounting his horse, he galloped with all haste outside the walls, back to his lonely abbey, while all Italy was ready to worship him.

His Boldness.—The extreme unselfishness of his life, coupled with complete fearlessness, made him able to become even the monitor of the popes, after he had had such weight in selecting them. History preserves letters which he wrote to these "vicars of Christ," couched in the terms of a superior writing to his subordinates! He did not hesitate to address them with the utmost boldness. When Innocent II. broke faith with him, he demanded, "Who shall execute justice for me upon you? If I had any judge before whom I might cite you, I would instantly show you—I speak this as one travailing in pain—what you have deserved at my hands!" Nor did he hesitate to admonish Eugenius III. to remember "that thou art but a man, and let the fear of Him who taketh away the breath of princes be continually before thine eyes." "Art thou ornamented with badges, shining with jewels, brilliant in silks, crowned with plumes, stuffed out with gold and silver embroideries? If thou shalt expel from contemplation all these things, so swiftly passing, and soon utterly to vanish like morning mists, there will appear to thee a man, naked, poor, needy, miserable, grieving because he is a man, blushing at his nakedness, deploring his birth; a man born to labor, not to honor; born of a woman, and so under condemnation; living only a little while,

and therefore full of fear; replete with miseries, and weeping because of them." Is it not a striking proof of the simple-hearted bravery of this man that in an age when might made right, and when men of all classes fawned at the feet of the mighty Pope of Europe, Bernard could dare, without fear or favor, and without even seeming to suspect that he was doing anything unusual,—could dare to rebuke and admonish the supreme pontiff even as a father might deal with his son?

His Eloquence: The Second Crusade.—Allusion has more than once been made to Bernard's power of persuasive speech. As Abélard was the leading thinker of his time, so Bernard was its greatest orator. It was his resistless eloquence that impelled the Second Crusade (1146). The first, preached by Peter the Hermit and Pope Urban II. (1095), had resulted in disaster. Bernard, once persuaded that a second effort was demanded by "the will of God," threw himself whole-souled into the mustering of the mighty army. With vivid language he depicted the outrages wrought upon the holy places of Jerusalem by blasphemous Mahometans, appealing to the people to become soldiers of the cross for the wresting of the ancient capital of Christendom out of the hands of the heathen. The multitudes at Vezaly were

so carried away by his moving oratory that he had to tear his own robes in pieces to satisfy their demand for crosses. When he came to argue with Conrad of Germany, the emperor contemptuously declared that he had but little taste for a holy war. But the intrepid preacher spoke of the judgment-seat, when Christ should say to this selfish monarch, "O man, how have *I* failed in aught of my duty towards *thee?*" Then, as Bernard dwelt upon the Christian responsibilities entailed by Conrad's riches and power, the great king burst into tears, exclaiming that he was ready to follow whithersoever the Lord might call him. Hardly had Conrad thus spoken when the entire multitude took up the cry, "Praise to God!" and Bernard sealed emperor and people with the cross. So, at last, Conrad of Germany, with Louis VII. of France, Queen Eleanor, and many noble ladies of both realms, set out in splendor at the head of a vast host of enthusiastic crusaders. The wretched disaster that befell them brought to Bernard the greatest bitterness of his life. Yet, when the tattered remnants of the splendid army were flung back into Europe in miserable defeat and shame, his only answer to the execrations that men heaped upon him was the gentle message, "Better that I be blamed than God."

The Conflict with Abélard.—It was six years before this that Bernard had gained the most brilliant personal victory of his life, and at the same time wrought his most lasting influence upon the history of the church. This was in his conflict with the greatest scholar of the age, Pierre Abélard. Enough already has been written to show the extreme contrast between these two men, both in their outer and their inner lives. It was simply inevitable that two such antagonistic leaders should eventually clash shields; we can only wonder that the struggle was so long delayed. Bernard, as has been clearly shown, was a religious mystic. And of no less vital importance in the control of his career was his profound sense of veneration, his respect for organized authority. On the other hand, Abélard was an ecclesiastical free-lance. He respected authority only in so far as it could justify its existence to his reason, which was his mistress. As Bernard said, nothing was too high for him. "He lifts his head to heaven, examines the lofty things of God, and returns to report to us the ineffable words which it were not lawful for a man to utter." Cousin has called him the father of modern rationalism. Far in advance of his times, the keenness of his views cut with the sharpest edge across the ingrained beliefs of the middle ages. Shortly

after he took the cowl at St. Denis he had been tried, albeit unfairly, for the heretical teachings of one of his works, and compelled to burn the book with his own hands. And, although afterwards receiving ecclesiastical vindication for that particular offence, the orthodoxy of the church always held him and his methods under the most grave suspicion. Twenty years passed, however, before the second trial, resulting in his utter humiliation, and very probably in his death, which ensued within the brief space of two years. The chief subject involved was the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is scarcely just to insist upon judging all of the methods which Bernard employed against the aged scholar, by our own modern standards of fairness. Knowing that he was coming into conflict with a dialectician of almost superhuman resource and skill, he perhaps at times made a freer use of "diplomacy" than this critical age would justify. For example, Bernard professed that his attention had first been called to the errors of Abélard by a letter he had recently received from William of Thierry; whereas it now seems perfectly clear that Bernard had known of these errors for some time, and tolerably clear that he did in some degree, at least, construct William's letter himself. But it is a cheap business to pick holes in the robe of a saint; and

certainly it is not fair to mutilate a twelfth century cowl with a twentieth century bodkin. Bernard, above all, believed that he was dealing with an arch enemy of the church that he loved as his own soul, and his age knew of no standard of holiness which prescribed rigorous fairness of treatment for an assailant of the orthodox faith. Bernard has been accused of personal prejudices against his brilliant adversary. The fact that three of Abélard's bitterest enemies had become Bernard's close friends might seem to lend color to this suggestion; but, on the whole, it may be dismissed as an entirely unworthy explanation of the struggle. As Storrs says, "Theirs was not an individual controversy. The men represented colliding tendencies. Two systems, two ages, came into shattering conflict in their persons. It was heart against head; a fervent sanctity against the critical and rationalizing temper; an adoring faith in mysterious truths, believed to have been announced by God, against the dissolving and destructive analysis which would force those truths into subjection to the human understanding. It was the whole series of church fathers, fitly and signally represented by Bernard, against recent thinkers who questioned everything, who refused to be bound by any authority, who valued Aristotle as superior to Augustine." It was the church against scholas-

ticism, the institution against the individual, authority against liberty, religion against reason. And it is well both for religion and for reason that in this particular conflict liberty failed.

The letter of William of Thierry, written after Abélard's final return to his old work of lecturing in Paris, mentioned thirteen points of heresy in his doctrinal position. Some of these theses are startling even to us of the present day, used though we be to the "new theology." What must have been their effect upon the mystical and mediæval Bernard? Convinced that the church was being wounded in the house of her friends, he set himself for her defence. But the methods he now adopted were strictly peaceful and Scriptural. First he visited Abélard in private, with a "friendly and familiar admonition." The next step was a warning in the presence of witnesses, Abélard's own students, whom the Abbot of Claivaux boldly adjured to burn the works of their master. The third and final step, according to the Scriptural rule (Matthew xviii. 17), would be a public denunciation, as Abélard knew full well. This move he determined to forestall by the demand for a public trial, when Bernard and he might appear before a council of the church, in hand-to-hand conflict. The prospect of such a conflict between the two great luminaries of France stirred the lively

imagination of the French people, and all were eager for the fray. The Cathedral of Sens was appointed as the place, and the Monday after Trinity as the time. Abélard, his old proud spirit flaming up within him once more, perchance looked forward with enthusiasm to a renewal of the victories of his youth. He well knew himself to be the most skilful dialectician and master of rhetoric in Europe. How could the monk of Clairvaux, orator though he was, withstand his peerless powers? And, to tell the truth, Bernard seemed not a little disturbed at the unexpected turn of affairs. He had never contemplated a wordy battle with the great master. So at first he positively declined to enter the lists, pleading, "I am but a boy beside him, and he a warrior from his youth!"

But when the day arrived, Bernard was on hand. It was the 4th of June, 1141. The Cathedral of Sens was filled to its doors with a brilliant if somewhat motley throng. Abélard's old students had gathered from every quarter. Bernard had seen to it that hosts of his own followers should be present. But the majority of the audience were attracted simply by the exciting prospect of a battle between giants. King Louis sat, "expectant and stupid," on the royal throne, with a dazzling array of knights and nobles standing behind him. Opposite these sat

the lords of the church, in all the gorgeous insignia of their office. "Shaven monks, with the white wool of Citeaux or the black tunic of St. Benedict, mingled with the throng of canons, clerics, scholastics, wandering masters, ragged, cosmopolitan students, and citizens of Sens and Paris in their gay holiday attire."

Presently Bernard entered, clad in his flowing white tunic; his head bowed, his eyes cast down in serious humility. Then in strode Abélard, "with head erect and proud mien, startling those who looked on his worn and scornful face,"—Abélard, apparently defiant and self-assured in the knowledge of his marvellous powers, anxious to win his greatest victory, and regain the glory of his now uncertain fame.

Then came a surprise. Bernard had scarcely begun to read his calm indictment, when Abélard suddenly fell into a panic of nervous fright, and threw his whole case to the winds by striding into the middle of the aisle and shouting out, "I will not be judged thus like a criminal! I appeal to Rome!" With that he left the cathedral, his prestige lost, his case prejudged, a beaten and utterly broken man. Bernard was astonished as much as any one; but, quickly recovering himself, he insisted with his usual coolness on the prosecution of the case, which resulted in the condemnation of Abélard, with

the terrific penalty of excommunication. Thus the honor of the church was vindicated and her integrity preserved. Thus the power of a single man not only quelled without exertion the tumultuous career of the mighty Abélard, but also, through this act, gave an effective check to the growing spirit of free inquiry, doubtless preventing religious revolution at an unpropitious season, and leaving the way open for a peaceful reformation when the church should be ripe for it after the lapse of four centuries. The world owes Bernard a debt of gratitude for this negative service of his, which was unquestionably the largest single achievement of his crowded and mighty life.

Summary of Bernard's Character.—What, in summing up, shall be said of this wonderful life? One who has lately written of Bernard with but little of sympathy or appreciation, describes him as "a frail, tense, absorbed, dominant little man. The face was white and worn with suffering, the form enfeebled with disease and exacting nervous exaltation; but there was a light of supreme strength and of joy in the penetrating eyes. He was a man who saw the Golden City with so near, so living a vision, that he was wholly impatient of the trivial pleasures of earth; a man formed in the mould of world-conquerors and world-politicians, in whose mind accident had

substituted a supernatural for a natural ideal; a man of such intensity and absorption of thought that he was almost incapable of admitting a doubt as to the correctness of his own judgment and purpose, and the folly of all that was opposed to it; a man in whom an altruistic ethic might transform, or disguise, but could never suppress, the demand of the entire nature for self-assertion. This was Bernard of Clairvaux." A more sympathetic writer says, "The marks of Saint Bernard's character were sweetness and gentle tolerance in the presence of honest opposition, and implacable vigor against shams and evil-doing. His was a perfect type of well-regulated individual judgment. His humanity and love of poverty were true and unalterable. He wrote and spoke with simplicity and directness, and with an energy and force of conviction which came from absolute command of his subject."

Dr. Storrs, writing in a spirit of the warmest enthusiasm, says, in the course of his brilliant lectures on "Bernard of Clairvaux," that "a man more entirely sincere and unselfish in his spirit and aims seems hardly to have lived since the Apostles; and certainly one more free from limitations, through any fear of either the craft or the violence of men, seems not to me to have trodden the earth."

His Intellectual Consonance with his Times. —The defects of his work arose rather from the spirit of his training than out of his own personal character. He lived in an age of darkness and of travail, in an age which mourned for the past that was dead, and groaned in the early birth-throes of ideas that should one day revolutionize Christendom. It was an age when the forces that worked for the development of the kingdom of God on earth were hidden and silent, bringing forth no fruit to perfection. The ears of corn were shaping, but they were not shaped. This narrowness and incompleteness of life characterizes the work of Bernard, which was conservative and restraining in its influence, curbing the explosive and untimely exuberance of the precocious Abélards and Arnolds of Brescia. Both Abélard and Bernard were monks and scholastics. These two institutions which they represented were, as we have seen, tending steadily towards the eventual reformation of the church. But in Abélard they had shot to a premature fruitage, which could not endure in the darkness and chill of the dark ages. Bernard was a natural and normal monk of the highest type, not only in the religious sense, but as an individual who was stronger than the papacy. He did not break with his times, hence his career was not an abortion. His scholasticism, also, by com-

bining with a reverent use of reason a stringent regard for constituted authority, was truer to the development of scholasticism than that of Abélard, which represented its logical outcome, not yet due. Bernard does not stand for retrogression. In him there was a real progress, a real development towards the goal of the kingdom. But this progress was natural, therefore constrained and slow, partaking of the spirit of the age in which he lived, the age of the hidden ears. His work appears the more remarkable when we reflect that the nutriment of these shaping ears, of the church itself at that time, was not the sincere, unmixed milk of the Word, but a strange commingling of stalwart faith and grovelling superstition, of religion and gross worldliness.

His Moral Contrast with his Times.—Bernard can only be appreciated at his full value when we keep fixedly in mind the character of the times in which he lived. When this is kept in mind, his personal character shines against the gloomy background of the dark ages as one of the brightest in all the annals of the saints. In a time when the most hideous corruptions disfigured the holy church of God, he succeeded in bringing into perfect maturity " the white flower of a blameless life." The chilling breath of those dark times could not lessen the flame of his intense devotion, which still imparts itself to other

Christian hearts in such noble hymns as "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts," "O Sacred Head, now Wounded," and,

> "Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
> With sweetness fills my breast!"

Of him it may still be said that "his thoughts have often the same power as hunger or thirst. They absorb the whole man whom they beset, and throw him with passionate decision in one direction." What passage in Thomas à Kempis or John Gerhard has equal warmth or tenderness with the following expression of the ecstatic contemplation of Christ? "If thou writest, nothing therein hath savor to me, unless I read Jesus in it. If thou discoursest or conversest, nothing there is agreeable to me unless in it also Jesus resounds. Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, a song of jubilee in the heart. He is our medicine, as well. Is any among you saddened? Let Jesus enter into his heart, and thence leap to his lips, and lo! at the rising illumination of His Name every cloud flies away, serenity returns."

The End.—Bernard died in his monastery at the age of sixty-two years. Agonizing brethren crowded about the death-bed of the Abbot of Clairvaux, and he, sorrowing for their sorrow, declared himself in a strait, not knowing whether

to choose to stay with them or to go and be with Christ, "which is far better." His last breath was exhausted in committing this decision to the will of God. "Happy transition!" writes one who saw him die; "from labor unto rest, from hope to fulfilment, from combat to crown, from death unto life, from faith to knowledge, from the far wandering to the native home, from the world to the Father!"

Yes, it was possible, even in that day of the myriad withered branches, for a soul to lie close to the Heart of the Great Vine, and so, abiding in Him, to bear fruit. Christ is the heart of the church, concerning which, while He said that it should not die, "He did not say it should never be sick." Nestling and hidden lies the beautiful life of Bernard,—a hidden ear of corn. When we think of him in his age, of his noble faith and unfaltering humility, what are we, that we shrink and tremble at every passing cloud? The night was over him, yet he never once lost heart. Shall we, in this age of the ripening corn, standing in the broad light of a newly risen sun, be less brave, less true than Bernard? His bugle-call rings to us through the ages: "Arise, thou soldier of Christ! Shake thyself from the dust! Return to the combat from which thou hast fled! Be bolder in the battle after this flight, that thou mayest in the end be only more gloriously triumphant!"

IV

RIPENING CORN

LUTHER

1. THE AWAKENING OF EUROPE

The Crusades.—With the twelfth century, while the dawn from the dark ages was as yet unbroken, appeared that romantic and mysterious movement of history known as the Crusades. All Europe had been sleeping; not the sleep of sweet rest and pleasant dreams, but the distressed, horrid slumber of nightmare. It was the age of the power of darkness. Then, in that darkest, stillest hour which is just before the dawn, a silver bugle sounded, clear and shrill, like the call of the chanticleer. It was God's breath that filled it. From sea to sea, from land to land, it sounded. Men rubbed their eyes; leaped to their feet in the darkness; buckled on their scabbards; shouted to the chill gray dawn, "It is the will of God!" and rushed, six hundred thousand strong, towards the holy city of Jerusalem, there "to break the heathen and uphold the Christ." Seven times the silver bugle sounded. Seven times it roused new sleepers to the hurry of impetuous warfare. Seven times the sons of reawakening Europe flung themselves across the seas against the sullen Saracens, who stood like a dark wall between them and the holy home of their Lord the Christ,—only to be cast back on the sodden shores, clotted with the blood of

defeat, or else cold corpses. Even children, a score of thousand children, mere tender babes, piped with their treble voices, "It is the will of God!" and sought to redeem, with swords in their dimpled hands, the home of the Babe of Bethlehem. But they, too,—Oh, pitiful!—were lost, a myriad babes in the wood, their only shroud the leaves, their only priest the robin.

"What a catastrophe!" men will say,—have said. The Crusades,—what a failure, what a vast mistake of history! But history in the end does not make mistakes. When we cannot understand her, it is only because we are not wise enough. For history is the handmaid of the Almighty, and "facts are the finger of God." The Crusades? Men of science tell us that to every sleeper, in every night, comes a moment fraught with the baleful threat of death. The tide of the blood is ebbing. The hammer of the pulse is silent. The great engine of the heart throbs its last and faintest. Then, they tell us, unless at that fearful time there come some stir of warning to the sleeper, some whispering call from the deeps of the darkness to startle the engine to its work again, and the pulse to its duty, and the blood to its flow, why, the heart sleeps forever, and when friends come they find a dead man there. So we may say that the call to the Crusades saved the life of Europe. Their

origin has been a mystery. Historians have stood aghast at this vast sudden movement of millions towards the same frail sentimental goal. But the call to the Crusades was the call of God. The sleepers stirred. Their pulses set a-beating to the quick throb of war-drums. The sluggish blood sprang once more like a brook. The Crusaders were defeated, but Europe was saved, because she was awake. The darkness was overpast. New life came, as always, out of the East into the West. From that moment the page of history brightens. The period of those strange holy wars, apparently so unsuccessful, is precisely the period of the dawn from the darkest hour that has eclipsed the world since Christ was slain, into the requickened life of day. And so, in the wiser way, those wars were gloriously successful. God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts. He "moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." The call to the Crusades was a thoughtful, loving device of the great watchful Father to save His sleeping children from the sleep of death. He made the wrath of man to praise Him.

The Revival of Learning.—A still more striking example of this last-mentioned fact resulted from the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in 1453. That is a date to be remembered, marking, as it does, the close of the

middle ages and the opening of modern history. The Turks had turned the tables on the Christians. These had failed to wrest the ancient capital of their own religion from the heathen; the heathen now proceed to wrest the more modern capital of the church from the Christians. But we can see how the result of this downfall of the city of Constantine was divinely ordered towards the ultimate reform of the church. For the direct outcome of the dreadful conquest of Constantinople was the Renaissance, the "rebirth" of letters; and the Renaissance was but the secular side of the Reformation.

How, it may be asked, was such an event as the mere downfall of a single city so largely productive of the revival of learning? Because the capital of the final Grecian empire had been for ten centuries the secluded guard-house of the Greek classics, which have ever been the fountain-head of human culture. Within those exclusive walls the priceless records of a golden past were selfishly shut up to the delectation of a proud and limited aristocracy of scholars. Petrarch, writing in the year 1360, said that there were then only eight men in Italy acquainted with the Hellenic tongue. But when the walls of the selfish city fell before the barbaric assault of the "unspeakable Turk," the scholarly refugees fled with their precious dowry to Chris-

tian Europe, and especially to Italy, the most precocious of the European nations. The now decadent scholasticism had made ready for their reception, aided by the work of such new and great literary leaders as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Therefore the result of this classical dispersion within a prepared receptive territory was like the contact of fire upon tinder. Europe suddenly blazed up from mediæval darkness into a splendid revival of learning.

The Renaissance meant, above all things else, the development of the individual; or, as Symonds elaborates it, "the attainment of self-conscious freedom by the human spirit," "the spirit of mankind recovering consciousness and the power of self-determination, recognizing the beauty of the outer world and of the body through art, liberating the reason in science and the conscience in religion, restoring culture to the intelligence, and establishing the principle of religious freedom." This idea of the complete development of the human spirit had formed also the essence of Greek culture, that perfect fruit and flower of a purely human development. We have seen how a misdirected conception of Christianity opposed this idea,—monasticism, on the one hand, by founding itself in the mystical East upon a theory of self-annihilation, and the organized church, on the other hand, which by the

access of worldly power was able to set itself up as a great institution for the absorption of the individual. But so strong is the innate thirst for self-expression, that we saw monasticism itself gradually evolving into a vast school for individual development, particularly through the influence of its direct product, scholasticism. Scholasticism, indeed, eventually became (as Stillé says) a tacit universal insurrection against authority, of the individual against the institution. "It was the swelling of the ocean before the storm, a sign of a great awakening of the human mind." The storm itself, the awakening, was the Renaissance; but the monks and scholastics had directly prepared the way for it.

The Papacy decays.—A negative preparation for the coming of this great humanistic revival was the decay of that power which had stood for the domination of the individual. The final hour of papal supremacy had struck just before the dawn of the new era. Throughout the thirteenth century the prestige of Hildebrand had not been lost, but rather advanced; in fact, the period between Innocent III. and Boniface VIII. may rightly be called "the noonday of papal dominion." Innocent had contemptuously likened the powers of the prince, as compared with his own, to the moon as compared with the sun; and Boniface, in his great bull "Unam Sanctam"

(1302), directed against Philip the Fair of France, claimed for the church the power both to create and depose kings, as it pleased. The event proved, however, that this boastful Boniface was to reverse positions with Hildebrand, and atone to imperial pride for the insult it had suffered at Canossa more than two centuries before.* The retaliation was unwitting, but none the less severe and real. Philip proving himself to be stronger than the Pope, agents of the French monarch attacked Boniface in his private residence at Anagni, and one of them, inflamed at the sight of his king's contemptuous enemy, struck the Pope in the face with his mailed fist, and would have killed him had he not been hindered. "The papacy had first shown its power by a great dramatic act," says Pennington, "and its decline was shown in the same manner. The drama of Anagni is to be set against the drama of Canossa."

But Philip was not content with a personal victory against a particular pope. His warfare did not cease with the death of Boniface, for he warred against the papacy itself. Under Clement V. (1309) he forced the removal of the papal seat from Rome to Avignon, a place within easy reach of his royal control, thus bringing

* See page 149.

about the bitterly bemoaned "Babylonish Captivity," which lasted for seventy-two years. This was succeeded by something even more disastrous, a papal schism. For at the end of that time a rival pope set up his throne in Rome, and for thirty years thereafter anathemas were fiercely hurled between Rome and Avignon, the while the people marvelled to see that these terrific papal thunderbolts possessed no power. "Confusion worse confounded" finally ensued as a result of the Council of Pisa, convoked in 1409 for the purpose of healing the schism. Instead of accomplishing its object, this council succeeded only in electing a third pope, who disputed with his other two rivals for the title of "Vicar of Christ." Even after the Council of Constance (1414-1418) had succeeded in healing the schism by compelling the three claimants to resign in favor of Martin V. as the one supreme ruler of Christendom, fresh shame was heaped upon the papacy by the personal profligacy of the popes, which exceeded anything that the dark ages had witnessed. And so, as Freeman sums it up, "the papacy sinks through three successive stages of degradation. The Babylonish captivity of Avignon removed the Roman pontiff from his native seat, and converted the vicegerent of Christ into the despised hireling of a French master. The great schism exhibited to the world

the spectacle of a spiritual sovereignty contested, like a temporal throne, between selfish and worthless disputants. At last the gap is healed, and Rome again receives her pontiffs; but she receives them only to exhibit the successors of Hildebrand and Innocent in the character of worldly and profligate Italian princes, bent only on the aggrandizement of their families, or at best on establishing the pettiest temporal claims of the Holy See." Thus, synchronously with the birth of the Renaissance, the once splendid structure of papal supremacy fell into irretrievable decay, and the downfall of an institution made room for the construction of the individual.

The Councils of Reform.—The Councils of Pisa and Constance, with that of Basel in 1439, are known as the Three Councils of Reform. They were called by the bishops, who realized the desperate straits into which the church had fallen through the corruption of its head. The first was, as we have seen, an abortion. The third was scarcely less. But that of Constance had great significance, quite apart from the fact that it settled the papal schism. Interest was so intense that eighteen thousand ecclesiastics were in attendance, besides many thousands of strangers. It was felt that the power of the papacy must be checked; consequently, the assembled bishops declared the council to be above

the Pope, "who is under obligation to obey the council." This action, although it became practically inoperative after a very short interval, had great moral effect in undermining the papal influence. But the Council of Constance gains still greater significance from the part it played in the development of the Renaissance. "From it dates the dawn of this movement north of the Alps. It kindled everywhere a zeal for the discovery of manuscripts. It brought scholars of different countries face to face, and made the movement European."

The Early Reformers.—Important as these things were, the Council of Constance yet has its prime interest for the student of church history in the fact that it condemned the teachings of Wyclif, Hus, and Jerome of Prague, and sentenced the two last named to the stake. It was a "council of reform," but it condemned the early reformers. It represented a spirit of vague stir and dissatisfaction, yet declined the leadership of those adventurous precursors of the Reformation who sealed their faith with their lives. It reached forth unto those things which are before, but could not be made to forget the things that are behind. Rooted as it was in mediævalism, infused with the essence of the past, it somehow could not be engrafted with these scions of the dawn. The world that was

ripe for the Renaissance seemed also ready for reform; yet when the "reformers" came they perished. Why?

John Wyclif (1320(?)-1384).—John Wyclif, whose bones the Council of Constance ordered to be exhumed, burned, and thrown upon a dunghill, had died thirty years before it assembled. It is not the least of the glories of England that upon her horizon arose this "morning star of the Reformation," heralding the dawn of a brighter day for Christendom. Leader of the English scholastics, and the pride of Oxford, he was a man of pure and simple life, whose chief defect in leadership was that he seemed solely "a man of intellect, not of feeling." The first occasion of his public opposition to the papacy arose from the disgraceful situation at Avignon,—Wyclif as a patriot favoring British resistance to the ecclesiastical hirelings of France. Thus there would seem to be some foundation for the plaint of an eminent Roman Catholic that the "Babylonish captivity" was responsible for the "great apostacy of the sixteenth century," when we consider the eventual influence of Wyclif upon that movement. He grew rapidly in his opposition to the papacy, and broadened his grounds therefor. Not only did he boldly announce the necessity of divorce between church and state, going so far as to deny the right of the church to hold any

property at all; he also probed searchingly into the interior doctrines of the church. This led him to repudiate and attack the theory of transubstantiation, substituting a doctrine like that which Luther held years afterwards. When this heresy was formally and publicly condemned, he simply reaffirmed his views, closing with the quiet words, "I believe that in the end the truth will conquer." Coupled with his zeal against all things papal was a strong zeal for the preaching of the gospel. Organizing bands of "simple priests," he sent them out barefoot, staff in hand, preaching repentance and denouncing the sinful lives of the clergy. His followers were known as "Lollards," the earliest Protestants of England.

The most remarkable teaching of Wyclif, which at last became the effective principle of the German Reformation, was his exaltation of the word of God. He taught that all other books, compared with this, are as the chaff to the wheat; even the "fathers" of the church are to be esteemed only as they build upon the word. "Though there were a hundred popes," his Trialogus declares, "and all the monks were transformed into cardinals, yet in matters of faith their opinions would be of no account, unless they were founded on Scripture." This belief in the supreme importance of the word led Wyclif to his greatest work, the translation of

the Bible out of Latin into the English varnacular (1382). In this way he became the father of English prose, as his contemporary, Chaucer, is the father of English poetry. Far more than this, he thus wrought unmeasured service for the militant kingdom, by placing in the hands of the humblest soldier that weapon effective against all foes, the true "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Although Wyclif did not become a leader, he was certainly a pioneer. His work had a greater immediate effect outside of England than within it, passing over half of Europe, and lodging especially in Bohemia, where through Hus and his followers it gained almost the dignity of a national religion. Wyclif's eventual influence is tersely intimated by R. L. Poole, when he says, "To Hus, whose works are to a great extent a cento of extracts from Wyclif, Luther owed much; and thus the spirit of the English teacher had its influence on the reformed churches of Europe."

John Hus (1369-1415) and Jerome (1365-1416).—John Hus became acquainted with the teachings of Wyclif chiefly through the knightly scholar, Jerome, of Prague, who studied at the universities of Paris, Cologne, Heidelberg, and Oxford. While at Oxford, Jerome translated several of Wyclif's works, which he afterwards brought back to Bohemia and distributed among

his friends. Hus was at this time preaching the gospel to the people of Prague in their own vernacular, a chapel having recently been founded for this purpose. He was "a man of the people," who flocked in crowds to hear him. His honesty and earnestness led him, when once converted to Wyclif's views, into a zealous preaching of reform and an attack of existing abuses both in practice and in doctrine, although in some points—as transubstantiation—he did not go to the lengths of his predecessor. In 1409 his election to the rectorship of the University of Prague brought him to the zenith of his power. The hostile priests, realizing that something must be done to check an influence so destructive of the pretensions of Rome, lodged formal complaint against Hus at the papal court. There were bulls and book-burnings and an eventual excommunication,—all the mediæval machinery for the extirpation of heretics was set in vigorous motion. Hus was but emboldened. Finally, in the month of June, 1415, he appeared before the Council of Constance in obedience to the summons of the Emperor Sigismund, who pledged him a safe-conduct; that is to say, a fair trial and a safe return to his home. The reformer's words on this occasion recall the words of Luther under strikingly similar circumstances. "I call God to witness," said Hus to

the threatening council, "that from my heart I am ready to change my views the moment you teach me better than Holy Scripture. Until then, I am as immovable as a rock!"

On July 6, 1415, his forty-sixth birthday, the safe-conduct was violated, Hus being delivered over to the secular power for proper punishment. His hierarchical judges were quite as regardful of punctilio as the priests that delivered Christ over to Pilate. Hus did not hesitate openly to reproach the emperor for the violation of his oath; with such eloquence, indeed, that "a burning blush of shame suffused the imperial countenance." When John Hus was bound to the stake and the flames began to entwine his martyred body, he cried, with a loud voice, "Christ, Thou Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me!" And the "council of reform" had slain a great reformer.

This council also condemned Jerome, who had stood by his friend in the time of his sorest need; for the knight had gone to Constance of his own free will, simply out of devotion to one who was to him as Luther to Melanchthon. In a season of weakness (September 23, 1415) Jerome submitted to the decrees of the council by signing a paper approving the condemnation of Wyclif and Hus. Afterwards, however,—in May, 1416, —he claimed a martyr's crown by confronting

the council with the noble words, "I will abjure only if it is proved from Holy Scripture that my doctrine is untrue." And he, too, was led to the fiery stake.

Hussite Wars.—The martyrdom of Hus and Jerome led to the fierce insurrection known as the Hussite Wars, which continued for eleven years with unabated ferocity under the leadership of the blind chief, Ziska, a born genius in war. The religious watchword of the fighting Hussites was their demand for the cup to be given in communion to the laity, as well as the bread; and to this demand Rome finally acceded, only to withdraw the concession after peace had at length been established.

The Moravians.—The Hussites survive to the present day in a peaceful band of "United Brethren," commonly known as Moravians, marked by the simple piety of their lives and for their activity in the work of foreign missions. They doubtless received this impulse through the consecrated example of their heroic leader, the Count von Zinzendorf, who revived and organized their scattered strength during the first half of the eighteenth century. For the student of history they have peculiar dramatic interest as a handful of living witnesses to the turmoil of the mediæval church, whose garments were so often stained with the blood of Christ's holiest saints.

Signs of the Times.—It is very easy for us, looking backward, to see that Christendom was on the verge of a revolution. England had produced a Wyclif, Bohemia her twin martyrs of Prague. Over in France, meanwhile, appeared that miraculous Maid of Orleans, while Italy will shortly witness the birth of Savonarola. Portentous signs of the times!

Joan of Arc (1412-1431).—What shall we think of Joan of Arc and her "voices"? It seems impossible to explain this marvellous career by any ordinary process of reasoning. Was she not a little quick-eared prophetess, endowed with finer senses than her common sisters, and therefore able to understand the mysterious spiritual voices that were whispering everywhere of a spiritual springtime about to burst upon the world? But the age would not listen to her and her voices. The age was deaf and blind to the things of the spirit. Her, also,—this little, tender maid,—they burnt her as a heretic! "Yes, my voices were of God!" she cried, as the flames ascended; "they have never deceived me!" And the next moment her innocent, brave spirit was at rest, "where, beyond these voices, there is peace."

German Mystics.—Throughout Germany and the Netherlands bands of spiritually minded men waited and prayed for the redemption of Israel.

From among "The Brothers of the Common Life" Thomas à Kempis still speaks to Christians of every age the deepest truths of a profound subjective piety. George Eliot says of his "Imitation of Christ" that "it was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting; it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust, and triumph,—not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet on the stones. And so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations." The Dominicans, Eckhart and Tauler, led a school of German mystics that eventually banded themselves into a great association known as "The Friends of God," who, while accepting the dogmas of the church and submitting to its authority, bitterly bemoaned the corruption of the clergy. Tauler's writings profoundly influenced Luther, whose most recent American biographer says that "one who would thoroughly understand Luther must, therefore, read Tauler." But in Italy all of this widespread spiritual intensity fused itself into a single life, and the soul of Girolamo Savonarola burned itself to ashes in a passionate protest against the prevailing "spiritual wickedness in high places."

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498).—This Dominican monk, having failed as a lecturer in

Florence, first attracted attention at Brescia, in the year 1486, when, at the age of thirty-four, he began to electrify the people with his terrific denunciations of the sins of Italy. Three years later he re-entered Florence, as an inmate of the convent of San Marco, to be immediately recognized as the most powerful orator of his times. Three prophecies he reiterated with burning fervor,—the church will be scourged, the church will be purified, and the time for this is nigh at hand. But he was not only religious, he was also a zealous patriot, directing many of his fiercest attacks against the reigning house of Medici, in whose overthrow he was largely instrumental, restoring the republic in 1494, and becoming virtual dictator of Florence for a season. When the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici had tried to bribe him into silence with splendid gifts, Savonarola replied, "A faithful dog does not give up barking in his master's defence because a bone is thrown to him. The monk cannot be bought."

The multifold public character of Savonarola has been tersely summed by a brilliant American lecturer, who says that in doctrine he was a Roman Catholic; in his warfare against the corrupt papacy, a Protestant; in strife against public corruption, a Puritan; and in his struggle for the welfare of the people, a democrat. It may be added that in all things he was an orator, for

nowhere does history present a more striking instance of large accomplishment by the magic power of an eloquent tongue than in the case of Savonarola, whose storms of speech swayed the multitudes as the wind will shake the reeds. Symonds says he would pour forth his thought "in columns of continuous flame, mingling figures of sublimest imagery with reasonings of severest accuracy, at one time melting his audience to tears, at another freezing them with terror, again quickening their souls with prayers and pleadings that had in them the sweetness of the very spirit of Christ." The scribe to whom we owe fragments of his sermons now and again interpolates the words, "Here I was so overcome with weeping that I could not go on." Another witness reports: "These sermons caused such terror, alarm, sobbing, and tears, that every one passed through the streets without speaking, more dead than alive." His favorite theme would be, "Repent! A judgment of God is at hand. A sword is suspended over you. Italy is doomed for her iniquity,—for the sins of the church, whose adulteries have filled the world; for the sins of the tyrants who encourage crime and trample upon souls; for the sins of you people, you fathers and mothers, you youths, you maidens, you children that lisp blasphemy!" His eloquence achieved a remark-

able triumph when, in the midst of the gay carnival time at Florence, he persuaded the people to give up their feast of follies and burn in one great sacrificial bonfire a gigantic pyramid of luxuries, in token of repentance and of contempt for the world with its vanities.

But the time came when Fra Girolamo himself was laid upon a pyre. The party of the Medici, restored to authority, had deep grudge against him. He had offended both state and church by his fierce frankness. It was the church, however, in the guise of the infamous Borgia family, that owed him the gravest debt. Rodrigo Borgia, as Alexander VI., was arch-fiend of all the evil popes. Against him and his innumerable villanies Savonarola had fulminated his heaviest thunderbolts. Rodrigo, finding that this troublesome preacher could not be silenced with the proffered reward of a cardinal's hat, gave him the martyr's instead; and in the year 1498 another "heretic" was burned at the stake, having first been subjected to torture seven times upon the rack, and then strangled. The early reformers trod a thorny pathway.

The Inquisition.—Heretics, indeed, were the source of such abundant trouble to the mediæval church that a powerful organization had been deemed necessary, having their extermination as its sole aim, and that by methods of extremest

cruelty. The Inquisition, founded in the year 1232 and reorganized during Savonarola's lifetime, found work constantly made ready for its bloody hands. Its activities had been especially lively during the thirteenth century, guided as they were by those fierce "dogs of the Lord," the Dominicans. It was then that war was ordered and executed against the Albigenses and other anti-sacerdotal sects, with such success as to secure their virtual annihilation.

The Waldenses.—The Waldenses, however, proved invincible against fire and sword, doubtless because they were inspired by worthier principles than their martyred predecessors. This ancient body of Italian Protestants still survive in their Alpine fastnesses, having been fiercely persecuted throughout many bitter years,—their sufferings so recently as in Milton's time drawing from that great poet the thrilling prayer beginning with the well-known words,—

> "Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold!"

The terrors of the Inquisition cannot be exaggerated. It possessed all of the power of a superbly perfected organization, upheld and directed by the unreserved sanction of the church itself. In the face of such an obstacle it would seem that reform is far to seek.

And yet reform is coming. Some historian has wisely said that the career of Rodrigo Borgia in itself necessitated the Reformation, as inevitably as the darkest hour precedes the dawn.

Pope Alexander VI. (1492-1503).—We have no time nor taste to detail the hideous crimes of the "Borgia triumvirate,"—father, son, and daughter,—high priests and high-priestess of assassination, fratricide, and incest. In order, however, that the reader may have fitting background for the approaching figure of Luther, we give this vivid summary of Rodrigo Borgia's character, from the historical "Studies" of H. Schütz Wilson:

"The life, the actions, and the character of this Pope will forever remain a moral problem. It must be remembered that he *was* Pope. He was not merely an almost incredibly wicked man, but he claimed to be the vicar of God. Apart even from the darkest crime which stains his infamous memory, his life was a long breach of the commandments which say thou shalt not steal; thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Alexander the Sixth is, perhaps, the greatest and the foulest criminal in history; and he is, furthermore, an occupant of the chair of St. Peter, the infallible pontiff of

a church which claims to represent Christianity. His life and his success in life destroy completely all the mystical pretensions which the superstitions and the fancies of men have woven round the papacy. The spectacle of Rodrigo Borgia as vicegerent of Christ excites almost a demoniac tendency to unnatural, mirthless amusement. The contrast of man and office awakens a sort of hideous humor. . . . His sensuality was measureless and his greed unbounded; but he shared his spoils with his offspring, and helped them to acquire for themselves. He had absolutely no conscience, no moral sense, and no dread whatever of the reward of crime. . . . It would almost seem as if some demon had, in mockery of men, created a being who should thrive through unsurpassed wickedness, and who —as the profoundest effort of most devilish satire —should be placed on high in the then chief office of Christendom, and be worshipped by millions as the infallible representative on earth of the all-wise, all-merciful, omniscient, and eternal God."

He died at last, in a ripe old age, from the effects of a cup of poison which he had hospitably prepared for a friendly cardinal. "Owing to the horrible effects of the Borgia poison the corpse of the Pope lost all shape and form, all distinction between length and breadth. A rope was

fastened round the feet, and one porter dragged the body to its place of sepulture. Humanity seemed to breathe more freely when this monster was removed from the earth." Such was the man whom Savonarola thought it right to denounce, and in whose lengthy catalogue of crime the murder of a single "heretic" was but a light and trivial thing. This man, moreover, was but an extreme type of the universal immorality of the times. Symonds says that it is "almost impossible to over-estimate the moral corruption of Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century." And a living Catholic historian confesses that the more thoroughly we investigate that period, "the darker is the picture which presents itself to us, in the whole of Europe, but especially in Italy."

Opening Gates.—The half-century traversed by the life of Savonarola was emphatically the period of the Renaissance. The year after he was born was that initial year of modern history, the year 1453, when the gates of the Golden Horn at last moved on their ancient hinges, flooding all Europe from the classical springs of the East. The history of civilization has often proved that revivals of learning can coexist with decadence in morals. Rodrigo Borgia was a prominent patron of the arts and letters. "Lorenzo the Magnificent" was so styled because he

lifted Florence to the zenith of her æsthetic magnificence. The genius of Titian was revelling in the beauties of nature, while the splendid powers of Michelangelo, whom Lorenzo discovered, delighted to spend themselves upon the glories of God. Over in Germany John Gutenberg has invented "the art preservative of all arts," the art of printing; while the simultaneous discovery of a process for the cheap manufacture of paper assures the widest usefulness for his invention. The times are big with promise. One is inevitably reminded of the preparations of the ancient world for the coming of the Child of Bethlehem. Suddenly Columbus discovers a new earth, and the hearts of men swell tumultuously with high emprise. Copernicus shortly discovers a new heaven, revolutionizing the geography of the sky and building the modern science of the stars. And then, five years before Savonarola is burnt at the stake, there is born in a German peasant's hut one who shall discover, not a new heaven nor a new earth, but, what is better, a new path from earth unto heaven, a path not of works, but of faith; where the wayfaring man, though a fool, may walk uprightly, supported by the strong Son of God. "An old writer describes the Church of All-Saints, at Wittenberg, as a manger, where in His lowly glory the Son of God was born again."

2. THE MAN FOR THE HOUR

Why the World waited for Luther.—Three distinct attributes are essential to the successful career of a great religious reformer,—a dual nature, a single purpose, and boundless courage. However otherwise great a reformer may be, if he do not combine in himself these three peculiarities, his work must fall short of the highest success, and prove a mere preparation, like that of Hus, or an unfruitful abortion, as with Savonarola. Of course, moreover, the times must be propitious. Yet it will scarcely suffice to say that the age was not ripe for reform before Luther. Doubtless this is in a measure true, but it is equally true that ripe times must often wait for the right man. The three groping "councils of reform" show plainly enough that the reawakening world, like some terrified child, had long been crying for a religious guardian whose torch of truth should dispel the surrounding gloom,—

> "An infant crying in the night;
> An infant crying for the light;
> And with no language but a cry."

As the rugged Carlyle so truthfully says, "Alas, we have known times call loudly enough for their great man; but not find him when they called! He was not there; providence had

not sent him; the time, calling its loudest, had to go down to confusion and wreck because he would not come when called." The world waited for the Reformation, and waited precisely until the day when a rare man could be found who, like Saul of Tarsus, combined in himself those three attributes of duality, simplicity, and bravery.

As to duality, if a man is to be a religious leader of men, he must not only be religious, he must also be a man. He must have both a real communion with God and a genuine sympathy with his fellows. Communion will mean joy, sympathy will mean passion, or compassion, or suffering. He must know how to be obedient to the delectable heavenly vision, and he must also learn obedience through the things which he suffers, being one of like passions as we are. He must be a saint, but he dare not be a hermit. A hermit can become a herald, nothing more. The great religious leader must be a soul who with one hand can seize the very horns of the altar, while the other is busy with the multifold cares of a troubled workaday world. As one has said, "The incarnation of the divine in the human is the key to all truth, the summary of all life."

Coupled with this spiritual duality there must be singleness of purpose, simplicity of aim,

absolute sincerity of vision. "The eye must be single." Paul could say, "This one thing I do." He determined to know only one thing. And for this determination, be it noted, he needed something more than moral earnestness. There was also required a keenness of mental vision that could pierce through the shells of things down to the truth; distinguishing that which is essential to the "one thing," and letting the non-essential go very much as it will. Thus it is that sincerity, seen from the other side, is called tolerance. Sincerity is not only moral singleness, it is also simplicity and keenness of vision.

And, finally, there must be bravery unbounded.

When a man with these attributes comes into an age that is crying for religious reform, Judaism is straightway transmuted into a gospel for the world, or the hidden ear of mediæval Christianity ripens suddenly into "the full corn in the ear,"—you have a Paul or a Luther.

Luther's Early Years.—Martin Luther was born in the village of Eisleben on the 10th of November, 1483, of humble and honest parents, who believed that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. But the stern old miner was ambitious for his son, desiring that he become a lawyer, and so sent him early to school. It is pleasant to read how, as the student lad sang carols for a

living in the streets of Eisenach, Madame Ursula Cotta was so attracted by his clear voice and open countenance as to make him one of her own family, thus introducing him to his first privileges of culture. Afterwards he matriculated at Erfurt, at that time the leading university of Germany, where his talents won universal admiration. His friends nick-named him "Musicus," on account of his fondness for the lyre and for singing. His favorite studies were the classics, and especially the writings of Cicero. That which chiefly attracted him in the classics was their delineation of human life. Luther was always an intensely human man. He was not led away, however, into an infatuation for mere "Humanism," as the rationalistic culture of the Renaissance was called. From this he was saved by the "duality" of his inner constitution. For he had also a profoundly religious temperament, developed and encouraged by the pious influences of his home. As Beard says of him, "an awe of sacred things, and a vivid perception of their tremendous reality, more than anything else, made Martin Luther what he was." It gave him great delight to find in the university library a copy of the Latin Bible, and to discover that not nearly all of the Word of God was contained in his missal and breviary, as he had hitherto ignorantly supposed. Two startling events,

which occurred shortly after he had come of age, made a deep impression on his sensitive and plastic character,—the sudden death of a young friend near his side, and, soon thereafter, his own narrow escape from death by lightning. This last-named incident really determined the course of his life. He had but just received his degree of Master of Arts, and "the wide world lay before him, where to choose." The directing flash blinded him while he was journeying through the heart of an ancient wood, on the roadside near Erfurt, which henceforth became his Damascus.

His Conversion.—Terrified and trembling, his heart asked, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Then he vowed that if God would but save him alive, he should straightway become a monk. He was the readier to do this because he had already tasted the bitterness of spiritual struggle, and, like Bernard, looked upon the cloister as the only refuge from the world and its temptations. Two weeks after the vow was made, the gates of the Augustinian cloister in Erfurt closed behind him,—he little witting that he should one day break them down, proclaiming liberty to these monastic captives of the law, and "the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

The Young Monk.—It seems almost profane to unbar the young monk's cell and watch the

fierce spiritual battles that were waged there, for, alas! he found that his troops of temptations could not be shut outside the convent gates. The world was all about him; his flesh he carried with him; and these two together opened the door to the devil. It was in vain that young "Brother Augustine" gave himself to the cruelties of an extremely rigid discipline, until the authorities of the university felt called upon to interfere in behalf of their promising alumnus. In spite of all penance, this utterly sincere man was ever tortured by a troubled conscience, as he endeavored to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. "If ever a monk could have gone to heaven by his observance of monastic vows, I should have been that monk," he afterwards wrote. "But, for the life of me, my heart could never be assured that God was well pleased with the work I had done, or had certainly heard my prayer. . . . For fifteen years I was just such a pious monk, and yet never advanced so far as to be able to say, 'Now I am sure that God is gracious to me,' or, 'Now I have sought and experienced that my devotion to my order and my strict life have helped and led me towards heaven!'"

There were one or two in the convent, however, who appreciated his difficulties and sympathized with his aspirations. In particular did the

vicar-general of the Augustinians, John Staupitz, direct him towards the true path, and prepare him for his eventual solution of the problem of salvation with the key of "justification by faith."

Professor and Preacher.—In the year 1508 Staupitz secured Luther's appointment as professor in the newly established university at Wittenberg, under the patronage of the great Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise. The spare hours of his cloistral life having been given to the diligent study of the Bible, Luther was shortly adjudged worthy of the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, and afterwards of Doctor of Theology, being duly authorized to lecture upon the various branches of the sacred science. In 1509 he was also made court preacher at Wittenberg, which remained his home until death. He speedily won great popularity with the students, besides establishing his fame with the people as a practical and powerful preacher of the gospel. Hostile testimony says that "he soon became a power in the pulpit. His voice was fine, sonorous, clear, striking. And the matter of his discourses seems to have attracted his hearers no less than his elocution. He departed wholly from the established type of sermon, founding himself not upon the scholastics, but upon the Bible, and especially upon the Epistles attributed to St. Paul."

The Voice of the Word.—The chief difficulty of his own spiritual life began finally to resolve itself in consequence of a striking experience that happened to him during his visit to Rome in the year 1511, whither he had been sent on a mission for his old friend, the vicar-general, Staupitz. It was then that Luther heard his "voices." He had come to Rome all thrilled with a devout Catholic's reverence for the Eternal City, whose historical associations appealed especially to one of his deeply poetic temperament. When he caught first sight of the majestic queen of the world, he fell upon the ground, and, his hands outstretched, exclaimed, "Hail, holy Rome!" But the enthusiasm of the provincial monk was destined to be severely shocked by the levity and luxury which he found on every hand during his month's sojourn in Rome. This man, all his life long, was terribly in earnest. His sins troubled him,—how to be rid of their guilt was his single aim. Did not the church preach self-denial, self-mortification, good works? No other way did he know, and he was intensely earnest about keeping strictly to that way. But, lo! here, in the inmost heart of Christendom, he perceived that those highest in the church did not practise what it preached. When he saw the very heart of things honeycombed with luxury, and wantonness, and worldliness, there began to arise in his

mind subtle insistent questionings as to whether all this doctrine of salvation by good works were not, after all, a hollow mockery, a delusion, and a snare. Yet still he clung to the old way. Then came the voice. While climbing on his knees the steps of "Pilate's Stairway," one day, in laborious effort towards atonement for his sins,—while spelling the poor tinkling alphabet of penance, repeating countless paternosters with his lips,—there sounded to his inner heart a still small voice, singing from his Latin Bible a strange new hymn of faith and hope and life,—"The just shall live by faith! The just shall live by faith!" And the words continually beat upon his heart until the voice was as the voice of thunder. Such, in a word, was the simple peaceful song that grew at last into his mighty battle-hymn of victory.

But Luther for the time quietly returned to Wittenberg, and continued in his routine duties. The growth in his heart, like all true growth, was slow and sure. Not until the 31st day of October, 1517, did the voice completely possess him, making him to become a mouth-piece for the clarion utterance of the very voice of God.

Indulgences.—It was in connection with the sale of indulgences. Pope Leo X., partially on account of his own expensive tastes, but especially for the purpose of completing St. Peter's

Cathedral at Rome, had directed this accustomed practice of the church to extreme lengths. This was a pope "in whose veins flowed the mercantile blood of the Medici;" and now he needed money. Let us, however, be fair. The church, as such, never officially taught that an indulgence can remit the guilt or punishment of sin, but simply that exemption from purgatory could thus be assured to those who, by true repentance, had already been absolved from their guilt. But such nice differences were ignored by the worldly and mercenary venders of these bills of exemption. Even the Roman Catholics now acknowledge that "there can be no question at all that indulgences as then preached were an 'incentive to sin and a danger to souls.'" The abuses were "gross as a mountain, open, palpable."

John Tetzel. — Particularly gross were the practices of the ecclesiastical cheap-john who invaded Luther's territory, John Tetzel by name. Travelling about in splendid style, whenever he entered a town all the bells would be rung, while the mayor with his aldermen would go out to meet him, the citizens and even the school-children joining in the long procession. They carried a great red cross before Tetzel, gilded with the Pope's coat-of-arms. He would go with much pomp into a church, set the great cross before the altar, and begin to exhort the people to

buy pardons; standing in the pulpit like an auctioneer, wheedling the ignorant folk out of their money in return for delivering their beloved dead from the flames of purgatory!

> "As soon as the money clinks in the box,
> The soul shall spring up from the flame!"

A good story is told on Tetzel, in a case where he had granted a personal absolution. A knight of Leipzig asked whether he could buy an indulgence beforehand for a certain crime he intended to commit, but which he did not desire to divulge. Tetzel said that he could, if the price were right. So the bargain was made. A short time afterwards, as Tetzel was departing from Leipzig laden with gold as a bee with pollen, this same knight waylaid him, beat him, and robbed him; and, when saying an affectionate farewell, announced that this was the crime for which Tetzel had extended an absolution beforehand!

For more than a year before the final outbreak, Luther had been openly denouncing this gross abuse. He had also given himself to a continuous and thorough study of the entire question of Papal authority, particularly in connection with the pardon of sins, which overshadowed every other consideration in his deeply religious nature. Earnest friends of the truth were looking to him, as to a natural leader, for action,

since it was generally recognized that a crisis could scarcely be avoided. Tetzel's buffoonery was but the occasion of an outbreak, the real and multifold causes of which we have been endeavoring to trace in preceding chapters.

The Ninety-five Theses.—So, on the 31st of October, 1517, Luther took advantage of a custom common among Wittenberg scholars, of posting theses on the door of the castle church for the sake of general discussion, he at this time arranging under ninety-five different headings not only negative denials of current abuses, especially in the sale of indulgences, but also positive declarations of the truth as it is taught in God's Word concerning repentance and salvation from sin. The theses are manifestly the fruit both of a correct Biblical theory and of a heartfelt Christian experience. They carry conviction with them. And they carried conviction straight to the hearts of the people who read them then, and in multiplied copies thereafter.

It chanced to be the eve of All-Saints' day. Crowds were pouring into the city, because the Pope had said that he would give an indulgence to all who would visit the Wittenberg church at that time. The church was particularly attractive, because within its sacred walls were to be found many marvellous relics, such as a chip from Noah's ark, some soot from the furnace in

which the three Hebrew children were miraculously protected, a piece of wood from our Lord's cradle, some of St. Christopher's beard, and nineteen thousand other sacred relics. Luther was greatly surprised at the stir caused by his fearless theses. Not only did they become the sensation of the crowds in Wittenberg, but the wonderful printing-press seized them, and flung them far and wide. "In fourteen days," he says, "they flew all over Germany." "In four weeks," says a contemporary, "they were diffused throughout all Christendom, as though the angels were the postmen." As soon as people read them, they would say, "This is what I have been thinking all the time!" The point is, this man dared to say what others had been thinking; and "to dare to say what other people only dare to think makes men martyrs and reformers."

The Church is born again (1517).—The Reformation was begun. October 31, 1517, is the birthday of the Protestant Church.

The Church is baptized (1521).—We can follow the growth of this great and complex movement only in the largest outline. Passing over the important colloquies of Heidelberg, Augsburg, and Leipzig, let us turn at once from this cradle scene of Protestantism to a day which—to carry out the figure—has appropriately been called the day of its baptism,—April 18, 1521,

when the infant church was nearly four years old. On that day it was definitely committed to look for its salvation through the word, and through the word alone.

During the stormy intervening period, Luther's views of the papacy had undergone a great though gradual change. In 1517 he was a devout Romanist, respecting the authority of Leo as the divinely appointed father of the church, whilst yet vehemently protesting against abuses of that authority. He even affirmed, in No. 78 of the Ninety-five Theses, that the Pope could confer "powers," gifts of healing, laying the blame for current abuses not on Leo, but at the feet of his unworthy agents. "If the Pope were acquainted with the exactions of the preachers of pardons, he would prefer that the Basilica of St. Peter should be burnt to ashes, rather than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep." In a letter written to Leo in 1518, he calls him the Vicar of Christ. In another, dated March 3, 1519, he expresses deep personal humility, and acknowledges the Roman Church as lord over every power on earth or in heaven, "except only Jesus Christ, the Lord of all." Yet that his mind was already gravely disturbed appears from a letter to his friend Spalatin, just ten days later, wherein he says, "I know not whether the Pope is antichrist himself, or his apostle."

After his excommunication, in June, 1520, these doubts settle into certainty; and in his last letter to Leo, sent in October of that year, he addresses him no longer as a superior, but—although with deep personal respect—treats him as an ecclesiastical equal, and declares that the Pope is a vicar of Christ simply because Christ is absent from Rome. The next month he calls him a hardened heretic and a blasphemer. In December, 1520, he took the step which shut him forever from the Roman fold, by burning the first decree of excommunication, with the words, "As thou, Pope, hast vexed the Holy One of the Lord, so may the eternal fire vex thee." This brought out the terrible decree, which is still read annually in Rome, consigning Luther and all his adherents to everlasting damnation.

Such was the gradual growth of Luther's opposition to the papacy. He had all along communicated his enlightenment to the people, so that finally, in 1521, they were ready to treat him as a hero when the emperor summoned him, on March 6, to journey for his trial to Worms upon the Rhine (famous in tradition as the scene of the Nibelungenlied). Here Charles had been sitting in diet with papal legates and with princely counsellors since the last of January. On the one hand, the Pope was demanding that the emperor give military execution to the religious sen-

tence against Luther. On the other hand, Charles feared the power of Luther's friends among the nobility, chief of whom was the powerful Elector of Saxony. Therefore, he finally summoned the cause of all this trouble, hoping that Luther by recantation might dispel his quandary.*

And now the month of April! On the second day of the month Luther left Wittenberg for Worms, accompanied by three friends, a professor, a student, and a monk. Preceded by the imperial herald in guaranty of temporary protection granted to this outlaw of the church, the four journeyed in an open farm-wagon. Justus Jonas joined the party. They were more than two weeks on the way; and this entire journey was what our newspapers would call an ovation. People filled the streets and climbed to the housetops in towns through which the popular hero

* Here it may be well briefly to dismiss several misconceptions in connection with this great historical event. First, as to the character of Charles. Politically, he was by no means a weak monarch, but the greatest German emperor since Charlemagne. He was ruler of Spain, Naples, Sicily, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and the Netherlands. He died a monk in Spain, his last breath pronouncing the word, "Jesus!" Secondly, the Eck who spoke against Luther at Worms was not the Eck of the Leipzig controversy; though even an historian like Froude confounds the two. In the third place, Melanchthon was not at Worms. He wished to be with his friend, but was needed at home.

was passing. In the cities of Leipzig and Erfurt special honor was manifested, Luther being a great favorite with the student classes. On the Lord's day he preached with great power; learned hearers guessed that he must have outdone the effectiveness of St. Paul himself. In the evenings, while lodging in the inns, he would refresh his spirit with the music of his lyre. It is doubtless with reference to this musical habit of his that the Roman Catholic, Döllinger, says of him that "heart and mind of the Germans were in his hand like the lyre in the hand of the musician." So, indeed, it proved from this time onward. Once during the journey he was ill, but never fearful. It was in a letter to Spalatin, while in the midst of great dangers, constantly increasing as he neared the imperial city, that he wrote: "Though there were as many devils in Worms as the tiles upon the house-tops, yet would I go!"

On the 16th the journey was over. Thousands gave him welcome. His enemies, alert to see this "German beast," as they called him, were impressed with the brilliant fire of his eyes. His appearance was greatly different from that of later life, when the familiar portraits were painted. Now he was only thirty-eight years old. Of but middle height, his face and form were thin, even emaciated, the lips prominent,

the hair—which was still tonsured—dark and curly. His voice was clear and melodious, and, as his enemies remarked, there shone a deep light in those sombre eyes. Neatly clothed in the monastic garb, his demeanor was dignified and modest. Such the man who, two days later, was to change the course of history and unfetter the human mind.

On the evening of the 17th they led him to the diet hall by side streets, in order to escape the crowd. The hall was filled with a brilliant and mighty company. What was he, poor monk, that he should resist emperor and pope? And, to tell the truth, the little man did falter. When Dr. John von Eck pointed to the heap of books, some twenty-five in all, and asked him, first, whether they were his; secondly, whether he would renounce them,—to the first question, he answered, "Yes," then hesitated as to the second, seemed on the point of giving way, and finally asked for time to consider. His friends were alarmed; his enemies exchanged glances over this easy triumph. The emperor reluctantly granted a day's delay. But the little monk went back to his lodgings, and that same night wrote, "I shall not retract one iota, so Christ help me!"

Nor did he. The next day was not merely the greatest of his life, but the chief in modern

history. On his way to the hall it is said that an old knight grasped his shoulder and spoke words of mingled warning and encouragement: "Little monk, little monk, thou treadest a dangerous path!" God was with him. Standing once more before emperor, electors, legates, archbishops, dukes, princes, counts, ambassadors,—more than two hundred in all,—he fears none alone but God. And one man with God is stronger than the world beside.

It is now past dark. In the spacious palace they have lit the torches, whose flickering light, as it falls on the apparel of princes, is increased and aided by sparks shot from many jewels,—"lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart." But the real prince stands yonder, alone and unadorned. He whose fit symbol is the strong-hearted ruby, stands before this second Pilate with his high-priests, ungemmed except by truth, his only panoply the panoply of God.

The lordly Eck, spokesman for the Pope, rebukes him for delaying the emperor thus; then speaks the carefully chosen words, "Defendest thou all these books which thou sayest are thine, or wilt thou recant some part?" "Responded Dr. Martin, both in Latin and in German, not clamorously, but modestly, yet not without a certain dignity and firmness, that his books are of three sorts,—books that teach, books that pro-

test, and books that argue. Now, should his opponents convince him of error, he would revoke the books and burn them. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?'" And he concluded with a warning to the emperor himself of the judgment of God on ungodly rulers!

Eck grows still more arrogant. In the name of the emperor he rebukes Luther for evading the question. It is not a matter for debate, says he, for these heresies, taught formerly by Hus and Wyclif, had already been condemned by both Pope and councils. "Give us, now, an answer, not an evasion; an answer without horns!"

And here is the answer he got:

"Since your Imperial Majesty and your Excellencies desire straightforward answer, an answer will I give having neither horns nor teeth. Save only I be vanquished either by proofs of Scripture or through clear reasonings,—for I believe neither Pope nor councils of themselves, it being clear as day that they have often erred and spoken contradictions,—so, then, remain I vanquished by the Holy Scriptures I myself have cited, and my conscience is prisoner to God's word! Retract I cannot and I will not aught, for to act against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound."

Confusion followed, as always when the light-

ning strikes. Pressed and threatened, this giant at bay then gathered all his vast spirit into a handful of burning words, and threw them forth into the world as living coals:

"Here stand I! I can do naught else! God help me! Amen!"

His weakness, through wrestlings of prayer, had gained the perfection of strength. Yesterday he was Luther; to-day he is Luther with God. All of this arrayed power is weaker than a word from the "German fool;" the mighty are confounded by the foolish; these princes are to his breath as chaff. "It is as we say," repeats Carlyle, "the greatest moment in the modern history of men. English puritanism, England and its parliaments, Americas, and vast work of these two centuries; French revolution, Europe and its work everywhere at present: the germ of it all lay there: had Luther in that moment done other, it had all been otherwise!"

Luther profited at Worms by the Emperor Sigismund's historic blush. When Roman Catholic partisans suggested to Charles that he cause the safe-conduct to be violated, he is said to have replied that he had no wish to blush like the traitorous protector of Hus. The heretic should be conducted safely to his home; afterwards, the decree of the Diet might be enforced. This decree "solemnly proscribed him as a here-

tic, forbade all men to house, shelter, or nourish him, and commanded them to lay hands upon him and deliver him up to the imperial officers. It also ordered his writings to be burnt." But Luther's friends provided against the execution of the edict by a cunning stratagem devised during the homeward journey. Armed knights sprang from ambush upon his carriage, and whirled him away no one knew whither, save they.

The Wartburg.—For almost a year he was subjected to a friendly imprisonment under the guardianship of the great elector, Frederick the Wise, in the mountain castle of the Wartburg, where, disguised as a knight and known to the country folk as "Prince George," he busied himself with literary work of the greatest importance in insuring a more general understanding of the word of God. It was during this period, within the remarkably short space of three months, that Luther translated the Greek Testament of Erasmus into an idiomatic German that remains to this day one of the wonders of literature. Luther did even more for the German language than Wyclif had done for English. This work, therefore, was of inestimable benefit not alone to the church, but also to the German people, for it established their hitherto confused language in a single literary form, which in turn served eventu-

ally to unify the nation. As Dr. Jacobs truthfully remarks, the achievement of those three months would alone have given to Luther a lasting renown.

It was while he was engaged upon this literary work that he threw his inkstand at the devil. Once more let us quote Carlyle, in his suggestive description of this incident: "Luther sat translating one of the psalms; he was worn down with long labor, with sickness, abstinence from food; there rose before him some hideous indefinable image, which he took for the evil one, to forbid his work. Luther started up, with fiend-defiance, flung his inkstand at the spectre, and it disappeared! The spot still remains there, a curious monument of several things. Any apothecary's apprentice can now tell us what we are to think of this apparition, in a scientific sense; but the man's heart that dare rise defiant, face to face, against hell itself, can give no higher proof of fearlessness. The thing he will quail before exists not on this earth or under it."

The Church is named (1529).—The young regenerated church was not named at the time of its "baptism." The naming did not take place until the year 1529. At first, the Roman Catholic emperor and his powerful friends had merely played with Luther's followers, in the hope that their zeal would soon die out. But since it grew

stronger, instead, and the Reformation was steadily spreading, strict laws were finally promulgated against all who followed Luther, and they were ranked as outcasts and outlaws because they would not submit to the Pope. We must not forget that the Holy Roman Empire still had a nominal existence; the Pope and the emperor were twin brothers, and in this case the emperor was sincerely devout. But the Lutherans refused to be outlawed. At the first Diet of Spires, held in 1526, they secured virtual annulment of the Edict of Worms, in a temporary permission accorded "every state so to live, rule, and believe, as it may hope and trust to answer before God and His Imperial Majesty." This was in fact equivalent to religious freedom. But a second diet, held three years later in the same city, revoked this amicable concession, and enacted against the further progress of the Reformation checks more positive than ever. Then it was that the Lutheran princes formally entered an emphatic protest against all measures of the Diet which might be contrary to the Word of God, to their consciences, or to the decision of the Diet of 1526. This bold action, says Dr. Schaff, "was a renewal and expansion of Luther's protest at Worms. The protest of a single monk had become the protest of princes and representatives of leading cities, who now for the first time

appeared as an organized party." One thing that came incidentally out of their protest was a name for the reformed portion of the church; it was henceforth called the Protestant Church, because it had protested. Spires is the Antioch of Protestantism (see Acts xi. 26). This protest was made on the 25th of April, 1529. In that same year Luther prepared, besides a larger work for the use of the ministry, his "Smaller Catechism," or summary of the Scriptures in a brief and plain form for the use of the common people and the children. This little book is the best known of all his writings, and has, indeed, become one of the most widely used books in all the world, especially in preparing young people for "confirmation," or reception by personal confession into the full fellowship of the kingdom.

The Church is confirmed (1530). — The reformed church was itself confirmed in its faith when it made a full confession of the same the next year, at Augsburg, a city already associated with the progress of the Reformation. The emperor at this time could ill afford the antagonism of the ever-increasing body of Protestants, as his empire was heavily threatened by hateful foes from abroad. "The unspeakable Turk" was once more menacing the safety and peace of Europe. Charles, therefore, convened the Diet of

Augsburg in April, 1530, in the hope of settling these vexed religious questions, so that his people could present a solid front against their foes. But in order that these questions might be really settled, it was first necessary that they be clearly understood. The Lutheran party, therefore, were permitted to present a confession of their faith, setting forth not only what they positively believed, but also those points in the Roman teaching which they disbelieved. This confession was read before the Diet on the 25th of June, 1530, the emperor falling asleep, but the majority listening attentively. Luther himself was not present, being confined in a second friendly imprisonment in the castle of the Coburg, on the Saxon frontier. He had, however, substantially "inspired" the confession, which was as to its form the work of his chief associate, the learned Philip Melanchthon, professor of Greek at Wittenberg.

The Confessions. — The Presbyterian historian, Dr. Schaff, characterizes this Augsburg Confession as "the first and most famous of evangelical confessions, . . . the most churchly, the most catholic, the most conservative creed of Protestantism. . . . It gave clear, full, systematic expression to the chief articles of faith for which Luther and his friends had been contending for thirteen years, since he raised his protest

against the traffic in indulgences. It furnished the key-note to similar public testimonies of faith, and strengthened the cause of the Reformation everywhere."

The Roman Catholics at once replied to this manifesto of the Protestants, evoking from Melanchthon a defence, or "Apology," of the Augsburg Confession, which he completed in April, 1531. The Apology is the most learned of the Lutheran symbols, seven times larger than the Confession, which it vindicates in scholarly and conclusive style. The other symbolical books of the Lutherans, besides the two catechisms, "larger" and "smaller," are the Smalkald Articles, prepared by Luther and adopted by the league of Protestant princes in 1537; and the Formula of Concord, which was not produced until 1577, more than thirty years after Luther's death. In the year 1580 these six distinctive creeds, which, like the three ancient confessions, were thrown out as successive bulwarks in defence of the faith, were all collected and incorporated with the ecumenical creeds in the Book of Concord, the chief theological monument of the Reformation.

The Diet of Augsburg did not accomplish the purpose for which Charles had called it. It served, on the contrary, only to widen the breach between the Roman Catholics and the Protest-

ants, much to the emperor's chagrin. The Protestant princes now formed the Smalkaldian League for military purposes, and civil war was prevented only by the imminent menace of the Turks. These were defeated and forced to retreat. Then, the religious question coming uppermost again, Roman Catholics and Protestants actually came to blows in the Smalkald War, the Catholics on their part having formed the "Holy League," which was victorious. In the year 1550 the prospects of the German Protestants seemed dark indeed. But through a second change of front on the part of the powerful but unprincipled Duke Maurice of Saxony their fortunes greatly brightened. A treaty of peace was at length concluded at Augsburg, September 25, 1555, which brought the history of the German Reformation to a close, by the promulgation of a permanent guarantee to Protestants of full religious liberty and equal rights with the Roman Catholics.

The Church comes of Age (1555).—If the regenerate church had its birthday at Wittenberg in 1517; its baptism at Worms in 1521; if it received its name at Spires in 1529, and was confirmed through confession at Augsburg in 1530, then the day of its coming of age was September 25, 1555, when the complete rights of a full-grown manhood were won after many hard-

fought battles. Luther had died nine years before, worn with labor, harassed by disease, and somewhat despondent as to the early success of the Reformation. Like many another great man, it was never given him to see the full fruits of a labor to which he had devoted the best years of an ardent and arduous life. If ever any work in this world has, under God, been due to the efforts of a single man, the Protestant Church owes its existence to this "solitary monk who shook the world."

The Death of Luther.—He died February 18, 1546, in the town of his birth, Eisleben, whither he had gone on the errand of a peace-maker. In one of his last letters to his anxious wife he wrote, "Dismiss your cares, for I have one who cares for me better than you or angels can. He lies in a manger, and hangs on the breast of a virgin, but is also seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." Modestly he says of his life-work, "Only a little of the first-fruits of wisdom—only a few fragments of the boundless heights, breadths, and depths of truth—have I been able to gather." Almost his last words were those of the Scripture text that he had fondly named "the little gospel," because it sums up the conclusion of the whole matter,—"God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish, but have everlasting life." When asked whether he died in the faith which he had preached, he distinctly answered, "Yes," and went peacefully to sleep.

His Childlike Trust.—This closing scene was but typical of the childlike religious trust that had marked his life even in stormiest seasons. When, in 1518, the Pope's spokesman at Augsburg had tauntingly asked him where he would find refuge if the Pope turned against him, he had unfalteringly answered, "Under the canopy of heaven, beneath the hand of God." At Worms, when at the critical point of his entire career, being just about to face the overpowering Diet, a friend heard him praying alone in his room. This friend transcribed the prayer, which has come down to us warm and throbbing with the profound spiritual life of this giant of God:

"Almighty and Eternal God, how is there but one thing to be seen upon earth! How the people open wide their mouths! How small and insignificant is their trust in God! How tender and weak the flesh, and how mighty and active the devil, working through his apostles and those wise in this world! How the world draws back the hand, and snarls, as it runs the common course,—the broad way to hell, where the godless belong! It has regard only for what is pretentious and powerful, great and mighty. If I

should turn my eyes in that direction, it would be all over with me; the clock would strike the hour, and sentence would be passed. O God! O God! O Thou, my God! Do Thou, my God, stand by me, against all the world's wisdom and reason. Oh, do it! Thou must do it! Yea, Thou alone must do it! Not mine, but Thine, is the cause. For my own self, I have nothing to do with these great earthly lords. I would prefer to have peaceful days, and to be out of this turmoil. But Thine, O Lord, is this cause; it is righteous and eternal. Stand by me, Thou true eternal God! In no man do I trust. All that is of the flesh, and that savors of the flesh, is here of no account. God, O God! dost Thou not hear me, O my God? Art thou dead? No. Thou canst not die; Thou art only hiding Thyself. Hast Thou chosen me for this work? I ask Thee how I may be sure of this, if it be Thy will: for I would never have thought, in all my life, of undertaking aught against such great lords. Stand by me, O God, in the Name of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, who shall be my defence and shelter, yea, my mighty fortress, through the might and strength of Thy Holy Ghost. Lord, where abidest Thou? Thou art my God; where art Thou? Come! come! I am ready to lay down my life patiently as a lamb. For the cause is right and it is Thine, so shall I never be

separated from Thee. Let all be done in Thy name! The world must leave my conscience unconstrained; and, although it should be full of devils, and my body, Thy handiwork and creation, be rent into fragments, yet Thy Word and Spirit are good to me. All this can befall only the body; the soul is Thine, and belongs to Thee, and shall abide with Thee eternally. Amen. God help me. Amen."

Afterwards, while confined in the castle of the Coburg, he turned this wonderful prayer into his famous battle-hymn, which he set to rough martial music that beats with the tread of the armies of the Lord of Hosts:

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A towering shield and weapon;
A mighty help 'mid every flood
Of ills that e'er can happen.
The ancient Prince of Hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour—
On earth is not his victor.

"By force of arms we nothing can—
Full soon were we down-ridden,
But for us fights the Mighty Man
Whom God Himself hath bidden.
Ask ye, Who is this same?
Christ Jesus is His Name,
The Lord of Sabaoth,
And Very God in truth—
He conquers in this battle.

LUTHER AND HIS FAMILY

"Though devils all the earth should fill,
Each watching to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill,
They cannot overpower us.
And let the Prince of Ill
Look grim as e'er he will,
We feel no dread alarm;
He's judged; he cannot harm;
Christ's lightest Word shall stay him.

"The Word shall stand: this must they yield—
Nor thank to them be for it;
Christ is our Helper on this field,
With His great gifts and Spirit.
And though they take our life,
Goods, honor, children, wife,
So let their worst be done,
Yet have they nothing won,—
And we still have the Kingdom."

And yet this man with the soul of a lion had the heart of a child. This great rock of a man, "whose words were half-battles," who could hurl fire and tempest into music, his soul leaping with the exultation of war as he shouted, "A mighty fortress is our God!" could sing thus of the Infant Jesus:

"A Babe to-day is born for you,
Of Mary, virgin pure and true;
A Baby lovable and bright,
To be your pleasure and delight.

"Ah, little Jesus! Baby sweet!
Make for Thyself a cradle meet,
And take Thy rest within my heart,
Which from Thee nevermore shall part!"

When, four years before his own death, his beloved little daughter fell asleep in her father's arms, he murmured, "Oh, how I love her! If the flesh is so strong, what must the spirit be! I am angry with myself for not rejoicing and being thankful." Gazing tearfully upon her shrouded form, he said, "Oh, dear little one, thou shalt surely rise again, and shine as a star, yea, even as the sun! I have sent a saint, a living saint, to heaven. Would that such a death might come to us! I should welcome it this very hour." It was a sad time for him, troubled as he was by the chaos that seemed to be threatening his work. But he never lost heart, even in the darkest hours, because his life was hid with Christ in God.

The Mistakes of a Giant.—Luther unquestionably made mistakes. Certainly he erred in assenting to the secret bigamy of Philip of Hesse. Some believe that his own marriage, under the circumstances, was a mistake. Schaff says that he did it impulsively, to "please his father, tease the Pope, and vex the devil." Again, he is frequently chidden for his harsh language, and for his obstinate attitude towards Zwingli. Yet even his greatest errors grew somehow out of his very greatness. Luther was almost overly great, —he was Cyclopean, Titanic. He seemed intellectually to have a sort of orbit vision. If we

conceive truth to be a sphere, whereof ordinary men can see but the half, it would almost seem that Luther could see all points of the sphere at once. That is to say, he could always "see the other side." This power made him extremely tolerant and catholic in matters that he did not deem essentials, whereas in these he was absolutely single-minded and determined. One of the mottoes of the Reformation was, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." It is this orbit vision of his which produces passages in his writings that are liable to misconstruction. He is claimed and quoted by pernicious doctrinaires who can see only a single point of truth where he seemed able actually to get a partial glimpse of the entire sphere. His mistakes were the mistakes of a giant.

Luther compared with Paul. — Mention has been often made of the likeness between the characters of Luther and St. Paul. Even Renan perceives it, and he had scant sympathy with either. In his life of St. Paul, the French sceptic says, "That historical character which upon the whole bears most analogy to St. Paul is Luther. In both there is the same violence in language, the same passion, the same energy, the same noble independence, the same frantic attachment to a thesis conceived as the truth." The analogy is not confined to character, but may be traced also

in the careers of the two men. This parallel may be fanciful, but it is certainly interesting. Paul was brought up a Pharisee of the Pharisees, Luther a Catholic of the Catholics. Both received scholarly and yet devotional training, Paul under Gamaliel, Luther influenced by Staupitz. Both were driven by the compulsion of an inner experience to find solace in the gospel instead of in the law. Both therefore broke with their religion,—Paul with Judaism, Luther with Rome. Both were persecuted, and escaped their foes only by the stratagem of their friends (see Acts ix. 25). Paul's intrepid journey to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 13) is paralleled by Luther's journey to Worms; Paul's defence before Agrippa by Luther's before Charles. Both had to contend with fanatics who abused the liberty of the gospel; both had to rebuke their chief associates for weakness,—Paul withstanding Peter, Luther reproving Melanchthon. Finally, if any one desires a parallel for the plain speech of Luther in the writings of St. Paul, he has but to read the Greek of certain passages in the Epistles which our translations have euphemized.

What St. Paul's writings did for the church of every age, Luther's writings did for the church of the Reformation. He was a voluminous author. His most important work, of course, was the translation of the Bible, finally

completed in 1534. His original writings have often been compared with those of St. Paul. Renan, again, says that in all literature "the work which resembles most in spirit the Epistle to the Galatians is Luther's 'Babylonian Captivity of the Church.'" His remarkable essay on "The Liberty of a Christian Man" abounds in the brilliant, almost blinding, flashes of paradoxical truths for which St. Paul is famous. His "Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans" might have been written by St. Paul himself,—must have been written by a man who had lived St. Paul's experiences. The chief reason for all of this striking similarity of style and matter lies in the simple fact that the Paul-like Luther did in effect but rediscover St. Paul. The first great principle of the Reformation was the supreme authority and efficacy of the word of God, which St. Paul had called "the power of God unto salvation." It, not the church, nor the councils, nor the Pope, was to furnish the only infallible rule of faith and practice. And the heart of the word of God Luther proclaimed to be the doctrine of justification by faith. This he drew bodily from the Epistles of St. Paul. The truth is, the "Church of St. Peter" had practically forgotten all about St. Paul, and had forgotten most of the Bible. Paul and his "power" were buried beneath the rubbish of tradition and the

solid rock of a superb institution. Luther's work was the overthrow of this institution,—in so far, at least, as it served as a sepulchre,—and a ruthless sweeping away of traditions. The word, uncovered, did the rest. The Reformation was but a return to the apostles. The reformer led back to the planter. Ruler and mystic had had their day, had served their part, but the church had lost the seed which is the word, and Luther was the farmer-monk who found it again. And the power of the seed does not lie in the husk, which is works, but in the kernel, which begets "faith in the bottom of the heart."

Luther compared with Bernard.—The story of the monk Bernard was beautiful, but it was also passing sad. Its sadness consists in its solitude. Somehow the life of Bernard, whom Luther called the holiest of monks, lacked strikingly the power of self-perpetuation. He was startlingly alone. There was not that in his life which had power to communicate itself to other lives and transform them, as he had been transformed. He remains to this day a unique specimen of a wonderful solitary fruit, a "hidden ear," hung in the church's granary for men to admire; he did not become a seed. He had "the form of godliness," good works; but somehow he could not transmit to the world "the power thereof." His life was hidden, immature, imperfect. It-

self the fruit of a dwarfed and degenerate seed, it could not regenerate others. It is as though one should discover, on a stalk of growing corn, a beautiful hidden ear. To the outer vision this ear seems perfect in form and development. But, strip down the husks, look into the heart of the ear, and you see that the grain lacks that fulness and hardness and ripeness which alone mean reproductive power. Pluck such an ear from the stalk, let the grain fall into the ground and die,—will it bear fruit a hundred-fold? Such was the beautiful life of Bernard. He died, and the world went on as before. His fruit had been lovely and fair, but it had missed its fulness; it had not been filled out by *faith*. His story therefore remains a mere biography, it is not history; the record of a career, not of a movement. He became a model, but he never became a life. He was an example, but not a seed.

Luther, on the other hand, became a tremendous force in the world, not only for his own time, but increasingly with the times to come. It is not that his works were holier than those of the saintly Bernard, but that he had the kernel of *faith* in the bottom of the heart. His was not a hidden life. Yet the glory is not to him, but to the divine principle within him. As in no age since the planting of the church, has the period since the Reformation witnessed the power

of "the full corn in the ear," the power of a reduplicating life. The quickening power of the church to-day touches thousands of human lives and transforms them, because it is a life impelling from within, not an example beckoning from without. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Each age has had its planters, and its rulers, and its mystics, and its reformers. But the signal glory of this age is not its planting, wide as that has been, nor yet the spreading of the blade at the magic touch of Christian rulership, nor yet the hidden saintly lives of its meditative mystics. The glory of this age is that the church is becoming reformed through having the spirit of Christ formed within it. The ripening corn of this present Christian age receives its nutrifying milk from the sincere, uncovered word.

3. RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION

Hostile Testimony.—The writer of this book is a Protestant. As such, he recognizes that he may be in danger of bias when telling the story of the German Reformation, and particularly when coming to speak of its results. He therefore begs permission to call to the stand at this

juncture a witness who can scarcely be suspected of partiality towards Luther or Lutherans, seeing that he is a veteran "champion of the Catholic point of view" in various controversial writings. This author, who is secretary to the Catholic Union of Great Britain, has recently produced a singularly interesting study called "Renaissance Types," to which this little book is already considerably indebted; and it is in the course of his somewhat hostile chapter on "Luther, the Revolutionist," that Mr. W. S. Lilly has this to say concerning the results of Luther's work:

"Of the greatness, the Titanic greatness of the man, there can be no question. The greatness of the Revolution wrought by him is manifest to all men. We may, with strict accuracy, ascribe to him the Protestant Reformation and all that came of it. The Continental Reformers, however much their private judgments may have differed from his, were clearly his spiritual offspring. The Anglican Reformation differed from the Continental in this, that in its inception it was rather political than religious. Henry VIII. rebelled not against Catholic dogma, but against papal supremacy. But after his death the direction of the ecclesiastical movement initiated by him passed into the hands of Cranmer, a disciple of Luther; and to Cranmer are due the

changes in a Protestant sense made in the communion and ordination offices of the Church of England. The doctrine to this day distinctive of the many varieties of what we may call 'orthodox' Protestantism, as opposed to its rationalistic developments, is Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. For Luther, faith meant the personal appropriation by the individual of the redeeming work of Christ; a fiduciary trust in Him; a laying hold of Him which effects an imputation of His righteousness. This is what he called 'the gospel.' The term is still used in that sense in popular Protestantism, which accounts of 'saving faith' precisely as he did. Now, it is certain that this doctrine, however we may feel towards it, was Luther's own particular and original deduction from the Pauline Epistles. Not a trace of it is to be found in any theologian from the second to the sixteenth century.* It is as unknown to the earliest fathers as to the latest schoolmen. For them, one and all, faith means assent to the propositions revealed by Christianity; belief in truths

* "Luther no doubt imagined that he had discovered some warrant for this dogma in the writings of St. Augustine. But as Cardinal Newman has shown in his 'Lectures on Justification,' published in 1838, the Lutheran teaching is quite irreconcilable with the Augustinian."—W. S. L.

taught by the Catholic church. So much is indubitable as mere matter of historical fact, apart from religious controversy, with which we are not now concerned. And it is sufficient to warrant us in regarding that 'orthodox' or evangelical Protestantism, which is still a considerable power in the world, as Luther's creation. Nor is it only in the distinctly religious domain that Luther's teaching has been so influential and so far-reaching. The French revolutionists, like the Anabaptists before them, merely applied in the sphere of politics the principles which Luther had laid down in the sphere of theology. They are debtors to Luther for that doctrine of the sovereignty of the individual which is the very foundation of Rousseau's 'Contrat Social' and of 'The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen,' formulated by Rousseau's disciples.

"But more. It is beyond question—to speak *ex humano die*—that Luther's revolution was the salvation of the papal church. A Catholic historian has called the Council of Trent the greatest thing effected by him. The reformation wrought there was, indeed, too long delayed. In spite of Clement VII.'s repeated promises of a General Council, none was summoned during his disastrous Pontificate. At length the fears and forebodings of the Roman Curia were obliged to give way to the exigencies of the times, and the

solemn sessions of the Tridentine fathers began. It cannot be maintained that the august assembly was as ecumenical in its composition as in its claims. No candid historian will deny the vast gain to the Christian world from its labors. As little will he deny that the predominance of the Italian element in it obscured its representative character, narrowed its sympathies, and marred its reforming work. But Luther's revolution served the cause of Catholicism in another way. It imposed upon Catholics the necessity of giving a rational account of the faith that was in them. It sent them back to a study of the sources of their doctrines, long buried under a mass of sophisms and superstitions. It quickened into new life both their theology and their philosophy. Nor is this all. In religion, as elsewhere, perpetual combat is the law and the condition of vitality. Nisard remarks, ' Les croyances disputées sont les seules qui sont profondes, outre que les mêmes combats qui renouvellent les esprits denouvellent les caractéres.' [*] These words are true to the letter, and Germany offers an admirable illustration of them. The struggle for existence imposed there upon Catholicism by contiguous Protestantism has had the most

* ["Controverted beliefs are the only ones that are profound; besides, the same controversies that strengthen the intellect strengthen also the character."]

salutary effect upon it. At the present time German Catholics form, so to speak, the backbone of the Roman Communion. They take a large share in, they exercise a wholesome influence on, not only the political but the mental and moral life of their country. In the domain of history—and especial of mediæval history—they hold a unique place. Their theological faculties are really learned. Even in scientific biblical criticism, so little cultivated, as a rule, by the spiritual subjects of the Pope, some of them have attained a well-earned reputation. In philosophy they have not only successfully defended the chief positions of the scholastics, but have built solidly thereon. It is a marvellous contrast to the intellectual decadence exhibited by Catholicism in countries where the Lutheran revolution never entered, or where it was repressed by the fires of inquisitors and the swords of dragoons."

The Counter-Reformation.—So great, indeed, was the effect wrought upon the Roman Catholic church by the Lutheran movement that it received the name of the Counter-Reformation. Dating from the accession of Pope Paul III., in 1534, it sought the twofold object of an outward recuperation from the numerical losses inflicted by Protestantism, and an inward purification from the corruption which Luther had so ruthlessly exposed.

Roman Catholic Missions.—One of the chief agencies for the accomplishment of the former purpose was the reawakening of the spirit of missions, which had lain practically dormant throughout a protracted barren period. The society of the Jesuits, founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1540, pledged all of its members "to obey in all things the reigning Pope,—to go into any country, to Turks, heathen, or heretics, or to whomsoever he might send them, at once, unconditionally, without question or reward." Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, became one of the most successful missionaries in the history of Christendom; laboring with marvellous success in India and Japan, being reputed to have won to the Roman church more souls in Asia than had been lost by the Reformation in Europe. Matthew Ricci carried Catholicism to the Chinese, while the newly discovered continents on the other side of the world were by no means neglected. Jesuit missionaries gained a foothold in South America which remains firm to this day, and were scarcely less successful in the extreme North, as is testified by the large numbers of Catholics to be found in "New France," or Canada. The inner reforms secured by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) have been already intimated by Mr. Lilly. This council was also serviceable to the Roman church in fortifying it against the battering-ram

of Protestantism by an emphatic reaffirmation of the traditional Roman Catholic beliefs, so that multitudes of the wavering were steadied into loyalty again by a voice which had the tone of authority. The immeasurable purification of the Roman church during the last four hundred years is unquestionably due, in very large measure, to the sweeping influence of the German Reformation.

The French Revolution.—It is not to be denied, on the other hand, that the German Reformation is largely responsible for that awful reign of terror and deluge of blood known as the French Revolution. Luther's work for civilization as such was nothing less than the unfettering of the human mind, the release of the individual from bondage to institutional authority. There had been tyrants before the later Louises, but there had been no Luther. This doughty German had dared to awaken the consciousness of power in the hitherto crushed and humbled "masses," and the result, in fiery France, was volcanic. Luther's noble doctrines of the liberty of a Christian man, the universal priesthood of believers, and the brotherhood of the family of God, were dwarfed and compressed into that terrific whirlwind cry of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," which really spelled the terrible words, License, Anarchy, and Fratricide. The

human mind is so frailly anchored to the rock of right that when some fresh breath of truth suddenly blows from out the blue, there is imminence of capsizing and wreck. And that is what happened when the German gale blew upon the volatile French. Yet God ever maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. We know now that the French Revolution was really a blessing in disguise, a great broom for the cleansing of Augean stables, a fearsome thunderstorm which cleared the air of all Europe and let in the sunshine of human liberty.

America. — Moreover, as Dr. Conrad points out (and he but follows the example of Michelet and Carlyle), "the principles of the Reformation were brought to America and embodied in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States. Under the government thus organized the people choose their own rulers, and their civil and religious rights are protected by law. And it is not too much to say that the priceless blessings of liberty and the rights of conscience and worship which the American people enjoy are the direct and indirect results of the truths and principles proclaimed by Luther more than three hundred and fifty years ago." Said Charles Dudley Warner, "The United States, Great Britain and its world-encircling colonies, Holland and its dependencies, the

German Empire, are to-day what they are largely because of the life of Martin Luther."

Education.—Luther's influence on the cause of popular education was immediate and profound. "Luther on Education" is the descriptive title of Professor Painter's thorough treatment of this important subject. He renovated education in all of its grades, for he believed, even as he said, that "the strength and glory of a town does not depend on its wealth, its walls, its great mansions, its powerful armaments, but on the number of its learned, serious, kind, and well-educated citizens." Particularly did he recommend the study of literature, since languages are the "scabbard that contains the sword of the Spirit, the casket that guards the jewels, the baskets which carry the loaves and fishes for the feeding of the multitude." At how many points did this great man touch the full circle of human life, with all of its manifold needs and aspirations! By such measure is his influence broad and deep to-day.

It only remains, now, briefly to trace the results of the Reformation in its own distinctive sphere, the spread of Protestantism, and our work is done.

Scandinavia.—The three kingdoms of Scandinavia followed close upon Germany in loyalty to the strictly Lutheran faith. Gustavus Vasa, who

became king of Sweden in 1523, favored Protestantism, which had already been preached by the two brothers Petersen, disciples of Luther. The Lutheran creed was adopted, to the exclusion of every other, and the bishops came over bodily into the Lutheran church. Denmark followed this example, under King Christian III.; and in 1536 the Reformation passed over also into Norway. When, in the year 1618, Europe became involved in that terrible religious and political conflict known as the Thirty Years' War, —one of the fiercest and most protracted in history,—the Protestant side met with defeat after defeat, and the Reformation might have ended after all in chaos, had not Sweden come to the rescue, after Denmark had fought in vain. The chief cause of this terrible struggle was a desperate effort on the part of Rome to nullify the peace concluded at Augsburg in 1555, and once more to fix spiritual fetters on Europe.

Gustavus Adolphus. — But in the year 1630 Gustavus Adolphus, the noble Protestant ruler of Sweden, landed with his army on the north coast of Germany, whence he marched towards the south, sweeping everything before him, and henceforth becoming champion to the crushed and bleeding Protestants of Germany. The decisive battle of the great war was fought at

Lützen, November 6, 1632. On his way to this struggle, when the joyous Germans hailed him with shouts of grateful acclaim, the knightly king replied, "Think not of me, for I am nothing but a weak and dying man. Think only of the cause." As the lines were drawn up for battle, prayers were devoutly said at the head of each regiment, and then Luther's battle-hymn pealed forth in all its rugged grandeur. The king waved his sword above his head and gave the command to advance, with the words: "Forward, in God's Name! Jesu, Jesu, Jesu! Help us to strive to-day to the honor of Thy Holy Name!" Forward on his white charger rode the king into the battle, never to come out alive. He fell, and news of the disaster was conveyed to the Swedish army by the sight of the riderless white horse, streaming with blood too red to be his own, as he tore wildly along in front of the lines of battle. When the Catholic cavaliers stood over the prostrate king and demanded to know his name, he gave the immortal reply: "I am the king of Sweden, who do seal the religion and liberty of the German nation with my blood." They plunged their swords again and again into the breast of the dying man, but his words, in spite of sword-thrusts, were destined to be fulfilled. His army, faithful to their leader in death as in life, gained a complete victory over

their foes, and Protestantism was saved. The Treaty of Westphalia terminated the Thirty Years' War, and forever established the great principle of religious toleration. Gustavus Adolphus did not live and die in vain.

The Lutherans.—The Evangelical Lutheran church, whose formal bond of union is the Augsburg Confession, comprises to-day a total baptized membership of nearly sixty million souls, of whom five-sixths are to be found in Europe. Germany and Scandinavia are the Lutheran strongholds. In North America growth has been very rapid during the last twenty years, so that the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches now vie with each other for third rank in the matter of numerical strength, the Methodists and Baptists leading. The Lutheran church has grave difficulties to contend with in this country, arising chiefly from the fact that it must deal with large numbers of communicants who do not speak the English language, and are not yet in touch with American institutions. Lutheran ministers preach the gospel in fourteen different languages in the United States, and superintend the transition of the children of thousands of European parents into a true American citizenship, thus achieving a home mission work of enormous magnitude and of untold importance.

Calvinism.—Next to Luther, the greatest ecclesiastical figure of Reformation times was John Calvin (1509-1564). This reformer was born and educated in France, but adopted Switzerland as his home, when, in 1536, he was exiled from his native land for adherence to the Protestant faith. Luther was twenty-five years old when Calvin was born, and they never met. The Genevan was, however, profoundly influenced by the German's teaching, with which in many points he agreed, as is proved by his acceptance of a revision of the Augsburg Confession. The chief doctrinal controversy within the ranks of the Protestants occurred between Luther and the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, nominally on the subject of the Lord's Supper, which really involved, however, the more important questions of the supremacy of the word, and the person of Christ. Zwingli reduced the Eucharist to a mere memorial, depriving it of all efficacy whatever. Luther, while repudiating both transubstantiation and also that other view sometimes attributed to him, and known as consubstantiation, stood firm for the doctrine of the real presence of the Lord, through the word. Calvin characterized the rationalizing views of Zwingli as "false and pernicious," expressing his preference for Luther's. He endeavored, however, to mediate between the two positions.

Moreover, the rigorously logical character of his mind worked out theories connected with the Divine Sovereignty and the human will, which gave a very distinctive character to Calvinism as a system of Protestant theology. His great work, the "Institutes," had a profound influence in shaping the doctrines of the later church, especially through the medium of the famous Westminster Confession (1647). Calvin assumed the leadership of the Swiss Reformation after the death of Zwingli in battle, in the year 1531, and became the leader of the "Reformed" churches, as distinguished from the Lutheran. His influence extended to France, among the Huguenots; to Scotland, where his fellow-believers became known as Presbyterians; and to the Netherlands, the home of the Dutch Reformed church. The Protestants in these three lands remain Calvinistic to the present day. John Knox, the hero of the Scotch Reformation, sat humbly at his feet, and "became more Calvinistic than Calvin." The Protestant church in Scotland took the distinctive name "Presbyterian" on account of a form of government developed by Calvin's legislative genius, whereof the central idea consists in a popular representation of the congregation by elders,—or "presbyters," to use a word of the Greek New Testament. The term "Huguenots," employed to

characterize the Protestants of France, is of uncertain origin, but was probably a nickname imported from Geneva. These French Calvinists have lived through seasons of heavy stress and storm. Persecuted continually by the papal monarchs, they nevertheless survived, numerous and powerful, noted for their austere virtues and the singular purity of their lives. The climax of persecution was reached on St. Bartholomew's Day of 1572, when as many as thirty thousand Protestants were murdered upon preconcerted signal throughout the empire. Political and civil rights were secured to them at length by the Edict of Nantes in 1598, but the fierce persecutions ensuing upon its revocation under Louis XIV. in 1685 forced hundreds of thousands into exile, many coming to our own country, and especially to South Carolina. In the city of Charleston is an ancient Huguenot church, where the descendants of these indomitable folk still worship with the unchanged historic liturgy of their fathers.

The various bodies known as the Calvinistic churches have stood with distinctive pre-eminence among Protestants for the Christian use of the law. Presbyterian communities are everywhere notable as upright, intelligent, law-abiding people. They stand with unswerving steadfastness for the integrity of the Lord's Day,

for temperance, for the manifestation of faith through good works. The religious life of Scotland bears strong witness to the inherent value of the Calvinistic ethic; and our own young country owes much to the steadying influence of these sturdy folk who believe in Christian liberty, but are ever ready to protest against an un-Christian license.

England.—As has been already noted, the English Reformation received its visible impulse rather from things political than religious, although religious influences had been long at work. The immediate occasion for throwing off the yoke of Rome was afforded by the effective protest of King Henry VIII. against the inconvenient authority of the Pope, instead of against abuses within the church itself. As Shakespeare tersely expresses it, the king's "conscience had crept too near another lady." The bare fact is, that Clement VII. had quite properly refused to salve Henry's conscience by affirming his divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his marriage with Anne Boleyn. So, while Henry remained in the Roman Catholic faith to the end of his days, he nevertheless struck Catholicism a vital blow in successfully repudiating the papal authority by the passage of the "Act of Supremacy," in 1534. This, doubtless, he would not have been able to accomplish but for the

damage already wrought by Luther. Efforts were made to bring reformer and ruler together, but spicy literary remains show that the effort was vain. Luther and Henry, to state the case mildly, were somewhat opposite types. Nevertheless, a popular movement towards a real Protestantism was now gradually making its way throughout England, aided by the dissemination of the reformers' writings, but chiefly by means of vernacular Bible translations, culminating at the last in the masterly "Authorized Version" of King James, in the year 1611. After Henry's death, Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, became leader of the Reformation, and through him as a medium England is largely indebted to the work of the German reformers. During Henry's lifetime Cranmer had spent a year and a half in Germany, becoming thoroughly imbued with the teachings and spirit of Luther. The Thirty-nine Articles are manifestly based upon the Augsburg Confession, as Episcopal writers declare, while the first Prayer-Book of the Church of England bears an extremely close agreement with the antecedent Lutheran service, with which Cranmer had an intimate acquaintance. From 1513 to 1549 there were "constantly recurring embassies and conferences between the Anglican and Lutheran divines and rulers." Those wishing to pursue

this question farther will be interested by Jacobs's " Lutheran Movement in England," which treats the subject exhaustively. A violent attempt was made by the Roman Catholic queen, " Bloody Mary," to undo Protestantism in England, but in this case again the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the church. Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer were publicly burned at the stake, three among hundreds of martyrs; but the church continued to grow. Under Elizabeth a state Protestantism regained the ascendency, surviving the shock with Puritanism, and becoming fixed with the restoration of the Stuart dynasty in an episcopal form which continues to the present time as the state church of England.

Not only has the Episcopal church had unusually full share in the development of Christian philanthropy, but it may be said with distinctive emphasis that no other body of Protestants has conserved so much of historic dignity, or paid so much attention to historic practices, as the Episcopalians. Refusing the Lutheran doctrine of a " universal priesthood of believers," they have retained belief in the priestly rank, and by the doctrine of an apostolic succession have emphasized their connection with the mighty church of the past. Nothing in the glorious heritage of Christian æsthetic

do they despise, but dignify their edifices with the touch of art, as their worship with the music of poetry. Not a few Anglican churches rival the cathedrals of Rome no less in the sensuous charm of their ritual than in the elegance of their artistic embellishment. Thus Protestantism has not failed to conserve an inheritance in Christian æsthetic, to guard its birthright to Catholic culture, as expressed in art and in poetry and music. The Episcopalians also deserve especial recognition for the efforts they have frequently made towards the organic unity of the church at large.

Puritanism.—Puritanism made its appearance in England as early as the reign of Edward VI. An extreme development of Protestantism, it stringently opposed the retention of any forms or customs that had been used in the church of Rome, whereas the conservatives had followed the principle of rejecting only such things as were contrary to Scripture. The ethical force of Puritanism was very great, standing again for an ascetic type of Christian life and conduct. During the persecutions inflicted by Queen Mary many Puritans fled to the continent of Europe, whence they returned upon the accession of Elizabeth, only to find themselves in conflict with what they deemed the popish tendencies of her reign. State measures were adopted to

secure uniformity of worship through the constraint and suppression of these "dissenters," and under James I. the laws became so strict as to cause a large migration into Holland. In the year 1620, a hundred and one members of this exiled pilgrim band sought religious freedom in the new world, whither they sailed in the famous little "Mayflower," to become the sturdy settlers of New England. The religious denomination of these pilgrim Puritans is known as "Congregationalism," because of the supremacy of the congregation in matters of government, doctrine, and discipline. The Puritan theology was extremely Calvinistic and extremely legalistic in its character. But a reaction from both of these positions has taken place throughout New England, whereof the most striking evidences may be seen in the Unitarian and Universalist movements; as well as in the ultra-liberal school of "the new theology," within the ranks of the Congregationalists themselves. The watchword with the leaders of this school is Progress, their aim being an adaptation of Christianity to changed conditions, a "reconciliation" of theology with science. The English Puritans made their power felt forever under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, with consequences of profound significance for the cause of Christian civilization.

Methodism.—"Methodism," originally so-called in ridicule of the methodical habits practised by the two Wesleys and their friends at Oxford, arose during the middle of the eighteenth century as a protest and reformation within the Church of England, dating its beginnings synchronously with the career of the famous John Wesley (1703-1791), whom Philip Schaff calls "the most apostolic man that the Anglo-Saxon race has produced." He and his brother Charles, the sweet singer of Protestantism, came in 1735 on a brief mission to Georgia, being greatly influenced during the journey by the piety of a band of German Protestants travelling to the same Southern colony. The growth of the movement was largely aided in its beginnings by the wonderful preaching of George Whitefield, a man of almost superhuman powers of persuasive eloquence. Methodism, which is Arminian * as to its theology, and episcopal in government, has rapidly developed into a prodigious power in Christendom, ranking to-day

* Jacobus Arminius, or James Harmensen (1560-1609), was a Dutch theologian who opposed the Calvinistic doctrine of election with the tenet of universal grace, holding that election is conditioned by faith. His ideas gained wide acceptance, the two opposing schools of orthodox Protestant theology to-day being known as Calvinistic and Arminian, with Lutheranism holding its original middle ground between the two.

as one of the largest and most influential bodies of Protestantism. Concerning the historical significance of this movement, we will hear the testimony of the British historian, J. R. Green, a clergyman of the English church. After describing the deplorable condition of religious indifference into which England had fallen, the historian reminds us that the country nevertheless remained religious at heart; that in the middle classes the old Puritan spirit still lived on, unchanged. "It was from this class that a religious revival burst forth which changed after a time the whole tone of English society. The church was restored to life and activity. Religion carried to the hearts of the people a fresh spirit of moral zeal, while it purified our literature and our manners. . . . A yet nobler result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor. It was not till the Wesleyan impulse had done its work that this philanthropic influence began." It is in Methodism, moreover, that we see the survival and development of that school of pietism which arose in Germany during the seventeenth century, under the leadership of Spener and Francke,—an influence that will always be needed to protect the

church against the dangers of an ever-threatening formalism.

Baptists.—The various "Baptist" denominations date their origin from Reformation times, the movement first appearing in Switzerland about the year 1523, and in later years gaining a widespread following throughout Europe and America,* and in missionary fields. The Baptists have, indeed, been distinguished for their aggressive methods of evangelization, setting in this respect an example well worthy of emulation by the more conservative bodies of Protestantism. While the work of Protestant missions had begun in the year 1705, when Ziegenbalg and Plütschau were sent out through the influence of Francke from Halle to Tranquebar, yet it was left for the Baptists to take the lead among English-speaking Protestants, and to effect the definite formation of regular missionary organizations, which have been a distinctive and prominent feature in the development of the church throughout the nineteenth century. The beginning was made in the year 1792, by the organization of the first Baptist missionary society, which the next year sent William Carey, the zealous "shoemaker missionary," out to India.

* Roger Williams founded the first Baptist church in this country, in the year 1639.

Diversity in Unity.—So it is that Protestantism springs out in various branches from the parent stem, each separate growth following its own particular bent, achieving a diversity for which we have often been reproached, but, be it noted, a diversity in unity. For the various branches of Protestantism are all one in that they cling with greater or less tenacity to the great Protestant principle of justification by faith and to the word of God as the supreme means through which this saving faith is bestowed. The several bodies have each contributed somewhat of distinctive value to the church as a whole, and it is a very open question, indeed, as to whether the abused "divisions" of Protestantism have really hindered the development of the kingdom of God. The various regiments of an army do but lend greater efficacy to an organism which, after all, has but one head. And we see that this efficacy has manifested itself in a most striking manner if we watch the militant growth of the kingdom. The last command of "the Captain of our salvation" rang with the note of a world-wide conquest, as He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature!" The regimental divisions of Protestantism have, during the last century, shown a zeal in the fulfilment of this command scarcely witnessed since

apostolic times. A spirit of generous rivalry, of religious competition, so to speak, resulting from the existence of separate bodies, has unquestionably been largely instrumental in effecting this result.

Diversity begets Activity.—Those greatly err who would set forth the divisions of Christendom as a hinderance to missionary effort. The friction which occasionally occurs has been as nothing in comparison with the augmented activity. We saw how the first effect of a divided church in Reformation times was to awaken and stimulate missionary activity in the church of Rome. So, also, now we see that the same century that witnessed the completed organization of the various large denominations of Protestantism witnessed, moreover, the entrance of these militant bodies into the still unconquered East, in a spirit of aggressive evangelization unknown to the church for ages.

A Law of the Kingdom.—Here let us remind ourselves of that strange mystical truth which is a law of history no less than of the natural world, as Bishop Berkeley perceived when he gave it utterance in the famous formula, "Westward the course of empire takes its way." Movements of history proceed, like the course of the sun, in an orbit from the East to the West; then back again, to the East by way of the

West. Christianity was an Eastern religion. Its origin, we know, was in the little land of Palestine, which nestles against the great mother-continent of Asia on the one side, precisely as Japan lies on the other side. Now, the course which the rays of this new world-light took was not back into the continent, but outward and westward, like the rays of the sun. Palestine is neighbor to Persia and Arabia, yet Persia and Arabia are not Christian countries. Palestine belongs to the same continent as India and China, yet India and China are to-day two of the greatest fields for missionary activity. It is but a step from Palestine across the Isthmus of Suez into the great continent of Africa, yet to-day Africa is known as the Dark Continent. That is because Christianity, the light of the world, followed the course of the sun in the diffusion of its rays. From Palestine the gospel first spread towards the West. In almost a straight line it journeyed, through the Cilician gates, to Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome. By the commencement of the seventh century we find the light so spread as to cover every land in its western track to the very outermost edges of Gaul and Spain, while the whole northern fringe of Africa, lying in the line of light, is ablaze with Christian churches. Moreover, from the outlying edges of Spain and Gaul the rays have

been refracted northward, to Wales and Ireland, among the Scots and Picts. During the next two centuries the British and the Germans were converted; and within the two centuries next succeeding the Christian map included the whole of Europe. And we know that when those Europeans came across the western sea, the light came also with them, ever broadening from that single star which appeared to the shepherds of Palestine, until to-day the entire sweep of Europe and this farthest western world is in its blessed pathway. Nor is that all. As surely as light travels in an orbit, so surely will the sweet blessed sunshine, having belted the whole wide world, come back into the East from the other side, and the gray dawn-land will be uplit again. That is the true significance of these "modern missions in the East."

The Church of the Future.—"Then cometh the harvest." This is the age of the ripening corn, but not of the ripened corn. When "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come." In that day, when the all-wise purposes of God shall have been accomplished through the service of His saints, we shall see the church of the future, united and glorious and free, made one through the Christian brotherhood of man. As one has said, the

marvellous vision of the imprisoned but undaunted planter, St. Paul, shall then have been fulfilled,—when, from the shores of Asia, once the lands of lords many, there shall ascend the exulting chorus, "One Lord!" when from the watch-towers of Europe, distracted by divisions in the faith, there shall roll forth the grateful chorus, "One Faith!" when from our own Americas, torn by controversies concerning baptism, there shall be uttered the great confession, "One Baptism!" when from the plains of Africa, as though the God of all the race were not her God, as though the Father of the entire human family were not her Father; when from despised and neglected Africa shall ascend the triumphant shout, "One God and Father of us all!" when the entire human family, gathered into one vast universal brotherhood, shall at last acknowledge and confess "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in all!" "And the knowledge of God shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." The growth of the kingdom will have reached its golden harvest-time when "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

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